

Ardusa

贊尼亞語

A GRAMMAR OF THE ARDUSAN LANGUAGES

*by Ian A. Cook*

*last edited*  
September 1, 2020

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## Ardusa: A Grammar of the Ardusan Languages

by Ian A. Cook

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Last edited September 1, 2020.

Typeset in Junicode and Fira Sans with X<sub>E</sub>L<sub>T</sub>E<sub>X</sub>.

Ardusa is a fictional landmass set in a fictional constructed world. All of the languages spoken on Ardusa, such as Tavonic, Alnuric, Redodhic, and others, are themselves fictional, spoken by fictional groups of people, and as such are not related to any naturally existing languages. These languages' vocabularies are entirely *a priori*, which means that no words are derived from the vocabularies of real-world languages. That being said, these languages are intended to be naturalistic, so similarities will occur. Nonetheless, any actual duplication is accidental.

🔗 No website yet.

↗️ <https://github.com/nai888/ardusa>

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# Abbreviations

1P	first person plural	INT	interrogative
1PC	first person paucal	INTR	intransitive
1S	first person singular	IPFV	imperfective
2P	second person plural	MED	medial
2PC	second person paucal	NEG	negative
2S	second person singular	NMZ	nominalizer
3P	third person plural	NPST	nonpast
3PC	third person paucal	NRTRV	non-restrictive
3S	third person singular	PASS	passive
ABS	absolutive	PC	paucal
ACC	accusative	PFV	perfective
ACT	active	PL	plural
AN	animate	PRG	progressive
DAT	dative	PROX	proximate
DEM	demonstrative	PST	past
DET	determiner	PTCP	participle
DIM	diminutive	Q	question particle
DIST	distal	REL	relative
ERG	ergative	RTRV	restrictive
GEN	genitive	RTSP	retrospective
IMP	imperative	SBJV	subjunctive
IN	inanimate	SG	singular
IND	indicative	TOP	topic
INF	infinitive		

\* ungrammatical

? grammatically questionable

! semantically odd or ill-formed

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# Acknowledgments

Given that I have not taken any official linguistics coursework, this work would not be possible without several sources of linguistic education. Mark Rosenfelder's *The Language Construction Kit* and *Advanced Language Construction Kit* were important to my first starting out in the world of language construction, with further knowledge gained from David J. Peterson's *The Art of Language Invention*. Of course, I received an unmeasurable amount of education via several online sources, especially the articles available on Wikipedia. Yet more education, as well as inspiration and motivation, have come from the *Conlangery* podcast and all its hosts and guests. Lexicon generation received guidance from Mark Rosenfelder's *The Conlanger's Lexipedia* and William S. Annis' *A Conlanger's Thesaurus*.

Finally, this document's format, layout, and organization have been influenced by several sources, particularly Thomas E. Payne's *Describing Morphosyntax*, Carsten Becker's *A Grammar of Ayeri*, and Matt Pearson's *The Okuna Reference Grammar*.

# Preface

This document provides a detailed grammatical description of the languages of Ardusa, a fictional landmass set in a fictional constructed world. This project serves as a method for linguistic research, as an intellectual exercise, as an outlet for creative and artistic expression, and as a setting for potential future works of fiction. It is intended primarily for my own personal use and entertainment, though others with similar linguistic interests will hopefully find it interesting and entertaining as well. I have chosen to use  $\text{\LaTeX}$  to typeset this grammar because it provides a way to be clear, consistent, and organized. Further, since  $\text{\LaTeX}$  uses plain text files, it allows me to use Git for version control so I can keep track of changes over time.

My goal is to build a series of languages with naturalistic grammars that are linguistically plausible and consistent, yet also original in their content and details. This project consists of three distinct and unrelated language families, each of which contains one or more related languages. Some elements of these languages are influenced by existing languages such as Japanese, Finnish, Navajo, Nahuatl, and Arabic, but they are not meant to simply mimic these, instead drawing this inspiration into new forms along with entirely *a priori* lexicons. Ardusa and the Ardusan languages is an ongoing project with no fixed endpoint or goal.

This concise grammar is my attempt to document the Ardusan languages in an official and systematic way, and as comprehensively as possible. It is intended to be the official description of the languages. This is a concise grammar because, admittedly, I am not a professional linguist, nor have I taken any linguistics coursework. My education in linguistics consists solely of self-guided research, which means invariably my knowledge will be limited. It is a concise grammar because, frankly, I don't know enough to go into greater detail. That being said, I'm always eager to learn, and will always accept feedback. Again, learning is one of the reasons for this endeavor.

Since the purpose of writing this grammar is to provide a comprehensive description of the Ardusan languages, not to teach them to others, it is not intended to serve as a textbook or as a way to learn the languages. I have organized topics thematically, rather than curricularly, and I employ technical terms when they are precise, accurate, and appropriate. I have not conducted a formal analysis of the languages, but I have worked to make it as descriptive as possible.

The discussion is ordered from the smallest elements of the languages to the largest. It begins with a description of each language's place in Ardusa followed by their phonologies, it addresses morphology and the combining of words, it discusses vocabulary and derivation, and it explains syntax and discourse. The final chapter serves as a reference grammar, summarizing all of the previous chapters. There are

also several appendices describing the conceptual metaphors that organize much of the lexicons, the naming practices of the fictional speakers of these languages, several translation examples, and lexicons. Other resources include a glossary of linguistic glossing abbreviations, a bibliography, and an index.

This document uses several linguistics conventions to clarify meaning. Any reference to specific orthographic spelling is marked with angled brackets, such as `<hin>`. Pronunciations are usually given phonemically, in which case they are marked with slashes, such as `/hin/`. Phonetic pronunciations are used only when conveying specific details like the difference between allophones, and are marked with square brackets, such as `[çin]`. Both phonemic and phonetic pronunciations are given using the International Phonetic Alphabet. Foreign words are always written in italics, such as *lu*. English glosses are surrounded by single quotes, such as ‘and’. If a morphological gloss is provided in-line, it is surrounded by parentheses, such as `(INF)`.

Many short examples are provided in one single line.

- (1) Tavonic: `yɔj šek /ʃek/` ‘ran’ (run-IND.PST.PFV)

Longer examples are usually provided with a multi-line, or interlinear, gloss. In these examples, the optional first line will indicate which language the example is in, if it is not clear from context. The next two lines present the text in that language, one in the Ardusan Script and one using the romanization, followed by the pronunciation. After this, the text is broken into its component morphemes, and the following line provides a morpheme-by-morpheme gloss. The final line provides an English translation of the example phrase or sentence.

- (2) Tavonic

`bzb vjv yɔðv:`

*Nan oko šeðo.*

`/nan o'ko 'ʃe.ðo/`

*nan=               oko    š-eðo*

`PL.AN.TOP= dog run-IND.PST.PRG`

‘The dogs were running.’

As shown in example 2, morpheme glosses are labeled with abbreviations in **SIMALL CAPS**. A full list of all glossing abbreviations is given on page ix. A hyphen marks a morpheme boundary within a word that is shared between the text and its gloss, while a period marks a boundary present in only one or the other, including when a single word in the text corresponds to multiple words in its gloss. Clitics are marked with an equals sign, reduplication with a tilde, discontinuous affixes (e.g., infixes, circumfixes) with angle brackets, and morphemes that cannot be easily separated out with backslashes.

The L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X source code for this grammar and a copy of this PDF are available in a public  GitHub repository. Undoubtedly, there will be errors in this document. If you notice any, please feel free to open an issue in the GitHub repository with a description and the location of the error.

*Ian A. Cook  
Minneapolis, September 8, 2018*

# Ardusa



0 50 100 150 200  
Miles



# **Part I**

## **Tavonic Family: Tavonic**

# History and Ethnography

This chapter will present a brief history of the Tavonic language family, followed by a short description of its ethnolinguistic context.

## 1.1 Brief History

The Tavotath (the Tavonic people) migrated to Ardusa hundreds of years ago in what they termed Year 1 of the Ardusan Era (AE). Ardusa is far from any other landmasses and is isolated from the influence of other lands and other peoples. The Tavotath landed in the warm southeastern regions of Ardusa where they first established their new home, naming this new realm *gn̥rɔ3v Urdeso*, a compound word meaning ‘Safe Land’. Over the following centuries, the Tavotath spread westward and northward throughout the whole of Ardusa.

As the Tavotath spread, they formed several individual territories, each of which eventually developed into small kingdoms. These kingdoms constantly battled one another for power, and borders were continually shifting. Those who fled the fighting fled northward, furthering the Tavonic expansion throughout Ardusa. As the Tavotath spread farther apart and splintered, their language diverged. Two main dialects emerged, one in the north and one in the south.

After a few hundred years, one kingdom in the south emerged as dominant, conquering or allying with more and more kingdoms until, by 327 AE, the entire south of Ardusa was united under one empire. This empire enforced the usage of the language that had emerged in the south, thus forming the Alnuric language. The empire continued to push northward until it spread too thin and reached a stalemate with the allied kingdoms in the north around 371 AE. Finally, in 582 AE after a couple hundred years of relatively stable rule, the empire declined and divided again into individual territories, leaving behind eight sovereign kingdoms.

While the empire was emerging in the south, the kingdoms in the north formed a loose alliance to resist its spread. The alliance managed to reach a stalemate with the empire, stopping its spread northward. The allied kingdoms together maintained the language that emerged in the north, thus forming the Redodhic language. Eventually, as the empire split in 582 AE and the northern alliance was no longer needed, the north also split into individual territories, leaving behind six sovereign kingdoms.

## 1.2 Ethnography

### 1.2.1 Demonyms and Language Names

The Tavotath were a tribe that migrated to Ardusa together, fleeing their previous home. The Tavonic word *tzqv tavo* /ta'vo/ means ‘person’, and so the derived word *tzqvzzd Tavotah* /ta.vo'taθ/ means ‘people’ or ‘tribe’. In other words, the Tavotath referred to themselves as the People, with *tzqvzbzj Tavonak* being the Language of the People. The Alnuric- and Redodhic-derived words, *tzqvrzcd Tevodeb* /te.vo'deθ/ and *tvqgzcq Tovujib* /to.vu'dʒiθ/ respectively, refer to all people who descended from the original Tavotath tribe. Both Alnuric and Redodhic are Tavotath languages and part of the Tavonic language family.

### 1.2.2 Ethnology

Here will be a brief ethnological description of the Tavotath.

### 1.2.3 Demography

Here will be a brief demographical description of the Tavotath.

# Phonology and Orthography

This chapter will present the phonological inventory of consonants and vowels and the orthography used to write them. An observational analysis of the Tavonic languages' syllable structures and phonotactics will follow. The chapter will close with notes on syllable stress within words and a brief exploration of intonation.

## 2.1 Phoneme Inventory

### 2.1.1 Consonants

With approximately 20 consonants, Tavonic has an “average” inventory.<sup>1</sup> Table 2.1 shows the full chart of consonant phonemes, along with several allophones enclosed in parentheses. Table 2.2 shows how each consonant in Tavonic is romanized.

Despite its “average” inventory of consonants, there are many more allophones that occur in the language. First, any doubled consonant is realized as a geminated (elongated) consonant.

- (1) *gb̥bɔŋ unner /u'n:er/ ‘empire’*

Thus, example 1 above is realized with a lengthened [n]. A doubled ⟨r⟩ is similarly geminated, but the pronunciation changes from a flap/tap to a trill.

The remaining allophones occur due to various sound change processes, mostly by assimilation. For example, /n/ becomes velarized when it appears immediately before a velar consonant.

- (2) *tzqvb̥bz tavonga [ta.von'ga] ‘humanlike’*

As discussed above, ⟨r⟩ can be pronounced as both a tap/flap [ɾ] and as a trill [r]. Additionally, when part of certain consonant clusters, it can be pronounced as an approximant [ɹ]. This primarily occurs when the ⟨r⟩ leads into a cluster or immediately follows a nasal.

- (3) *l̥nvŋbzmc frorgali [froɹ.'ga.li] ‘to un-see’*

---

<sup>1</sup>Ian Maddieson, “Consonant Inventories,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <http://wals.info/chapter/1>.

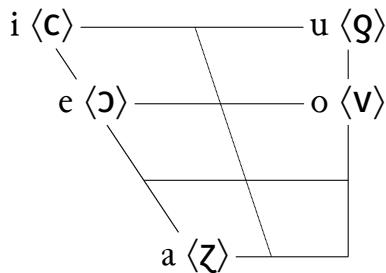
Table 2.1: Tavonic Phonetic Consonant Inventory (allophones in parentheses)

	Bilabial	Labio-dental		Dental		Alveolar		Post-alveolar		Velar
Nasal	m					n				(ŋ)
Plosive		p	b	t	d				k	g
Fricative		f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ	x
Flap/Tap						r				y
Trill						(r)				
Approximant						(ɹ)				
Lateral						l				

Table 2.2: Tavonic Consonant Romanization

Phone	Phoneme	Script	Romanization	English	Notes
[m]	/m/	⟨þ⟩	⟨m⟩	⟨m⟩	
[n]	/n/	⟨þ⟩	⟨n⟩	⟨n⟩	
[ŋ]	/n/	⟨þ⟩	⟨n⟩	⟨n⟩	/n/ becomes velarized before a velar consonant
[p]	/p/	⟨L⟩	⟨p⟩	⟨p⟩	
[b]	/b/	⟨ʒ⟩	⟨b⟩	⟨b⟩	
[t]	/t/	⟨ʈ⟩	⟨t⟩	⟨t⟩	
[d]	/d/	⟨ɖ⟩	⟨d⟩	⟨d⟩	
[k]	/k/	⟨J⟩	⟨k⟩	⟨k⟩	
[g]	/g/	⟨Ɓ⟩	⟨g⟩	⟨g⟩	
[f]	/f/	⟨l⟩	⟨f⟩	⟨f⟩	
[v]	/v/	⟨q⟩	⟨v⟩	⟨v⟩	
[θ]	/θ/	⟨q̪⟩	⟨þ⟩	⟨th⟩	
[ð]	/ð/	⟨d̪⟩	⟨ð⟩	⟨dh⟩	
[s]	/s/	⟨ʒ⟩	⟨s⟩	⟨s⟩	
[z]	/z/	⟨ʒ⟩	⟨z⟩	⟨z⟩	
[ʃ]	/ʃ/	⟨y⟩	⟨ʂ⟩	⟨sh⟩	
[ʐ]	/ʐ/	⟨ʌ⟩	⟨ʐ⟩	⟨zh⟩	
[x]	/x/	⟨p⟩	⟨᷑k⟩	⟨kh⟩	
[ɣ]	/ɣ/	⟨d⟩	⟨᷑ʂ⟩	⟨gh⟩	
[r̪]	/r̪/	⟨ŋ⟩	⟨r̪⟩	⟨r̪⟩	
[r̪]	/r̪/	⟨ŋŋ⟩	⟨rr̪⟩	⟨rr̪⟩	⟨r̪⟩ is trilled when doubled
[ɹ̪]	/r̪/	⟨ŋ⟩	⟨r̪⟩	⟨r̪⟩	⟨r̪⟩ is occasionally pronounced as an approximant when a part of a consonant cluster
[l̪]	/l̪/	⟨m⟩	⟨l̪⟩	⟨l̪⟩	

Table 2.3: Tavonic Vowel Inventory



## 2.1.2 Vowels

Tavonic distinguishes five vowel qualities, as shown in Table 2.3, giving it an “average” inventory.<sup>2</sup> This means the consonant–vowel ratio is 20:5 or 4.0, which is “average”.<sup>3</sup> Tavonic does not distinguish long and short vowels and does not allow any diphthongs.

Note that all Tavonic vowels have a very rigid acceptable pronunciation with very little variance.

- (4) a. *ʐŋcbʒzŋc* *akrinsali* ‘to rewrite’ is pronounced /ak.rin'sa.li/. ⟨i⟩ is not pronounced with a lax [ɪ] in closed syllables (i.e., /ak.rɪn'sa.li/)
- b. *ɔðɔŋcʃ* *eðerik* ‘pencil’ is pronounced /e.ðe'rik/. ⟨e⟩ is not pronounced with an open [ɛ] in closed syllables or syllables with secondary stress or with a central [ə] in unaccented syllables (i.e., /ɛ.ðə'rik/), nor is it diphthongized to [eɪ] (i.e., /eɪ.ðe'rik/)
- c. *pʒŋv* *kalo* ‘man’ is pronounced /xa'lo/. ⟨a⟩ is not pronounced with a raised [æ] (i.e., /xæ'lo/), a backed [ɑ] (i.e., /xa'lo/), or a centralized [ɜ] (i.e., /xɜ'lo/)
- d. *ɔɔvbʃc* *esondi* ‘arable’ is pronounced /e.son'di/. ⟨o⟩ is not pronounced with an open [ɔ] (i.e., [e.sɔn'di]), nor is it diphthongized to [ou] (i.e., /e.soun'di/)
- e. *lŋɔþʒzŋc* *frumbali* ‘to misunderstand’ is pronounced /frum'ba.li/. ⟨u⟩ is not pronounced with an open [ʌ] (i.e., /frʌm'ba.li/) or a centralized [ʊ] (i.e., /frum'ba.li/)

## 2.2 Phonotactics

At the time of writing, there does not yet exist a sufficient corpus for a meaningful statistical analysis of Tavonic’s phonotactics. Therefore, this section will present only a cursory observational analysis.

### 2.2.1 Syllable Structures

Syllables in Tavonic must contain a vowel to serve as the syllable’s nucleus. Each syllable will only have at most one vowel. Syllables may also include any single consonant or one of a limited set of

<sup>2</sup>Ian Maddieson, “Vowel Quality Inventories,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <http://wals.info/chapter/2>.

<sup>3</sup>Ian Maddieson, “Consonant–Vowel Ratio,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <http://wals.info/chapter/3>.

two-consonant clusters as the onset, coda, or both.

In other words, the most complex syllable structure allowed in Tavonic is CCVCC, with restrictions on the allowable consonant clusters, giving Tavonic a “moderately complex syllable structure”.<sup>4</sup>

## V

Since vowels are required to form a syllable nucleus, the most basic syllable structure is simply a vowel (V). Any syllable that starts with a vowel will occur exclusively at the beginning of a word.

- (5) a. ɔ e /e/ ‘in’ or ‘on’  
b. ɔðɔŋ eðer /e'ðer/ ‘pen’  
c. ɿʒvɒ abom /a'bom/ ‘two’  
d. vJv oko /o'ko/ ‘dog’  
e. ɿʒɔJvb̥ usukon /u.su'kon/ ‘possessor’

## C

A syllable can contain a single-consonant onset or coda. There is no restriction on which consonants may appear in the onset or coda with just one consonant. CV is likely the most frequent type of syllable in Tavonic, with CVC probably being the second-most-frequent syllable type.

- (6) a. bʐ ga /ga/ ‘but’  
b. mŋ lu /lu/ ‘and’  
c. þv mo /mo/ ‘with’  
d. pʐmŋv kalo /xa'lo/ ‘man’  
e. yɔðv šeðo /ʃe.ðo/ (run.PST.IND.PRG) ‘was running’  
f. ɿʒmŋ ablu /ab'lù/ ‘cat’  
g. ɿŋrɔ urda /ur'da/ ‘safe’  
h. ɿŋzrɔn̩ akradir /ak.ra'dir/ ‘writing implement’  
i. ɿʒvɔbʐ̥ esonak /e.so'nak/ ‘citizen’

Across two syllables within a word, there are restrictions on the combination of consonants that are possible. At such syllable boundaries, a plosive<sup>5</sup> or a fricative<sup>6</sup> can be followed by a liquid<sup>7</sup>; a liquid may be followed by a plosive, fricative, nasal<sup>8</sup>, or a different liquid; or a nasal can be followed by any other consonant.

<sup>4</sup>Ian Maddieson, “Syllable Structure,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <http://wals.info/chapter/12>.

<sup>5</sup>i.e., ⟨p⟩, ⟨t⟩, ⟨k⟩, ⟨b⟩, ⟨d⟩, or ⟨g⟩

<sup>6</sup>i.e., ⟨f⟩, ⟨ɸ⟩, ⟨s⟩, ⟨ʃ⟩, ⟨t̚⟩, ⟨v⟩, ⟨ð⟩, ⟨z⟩, ⟨ʒ⟩, or ⟨ɣ⟩

<sup>7</sup>i.e., ⟨l⟩ or ⟨r⟩

<sup>8</sup>i.e., ⟨m⟩ or ⟨n⟩

- (7) a. *čmžč elbi* /el'bi/ 'egg'  
 b. *vþþv ongo* /on'go/ 'pan'  
 c. *pzmqčb kalven* /xal'ven/ '400'  
 d. *zžmgbþz ablunga* /ab.lun'ga/ 'catlike'

## CC

Syllables may contain onsets or codas with two consonants, but these shapes are less common and there are restrictions on the possible combinations. Syllable onsets with two consonants may only occur at the beginning of a word and may only contain a plosive or fricative followed by a liquid. Syllable codas with two consonants may only occur at the end of a word and may only contain a liquid followed by a plosive.

- (8) a. *lŋzþ pral* /pral/ 'some'  
 b. *þŋvðþbþc tloþendi* /tlo.θen'di/ 'permittable'  
 c. *lŋzþþc frandi* /fran'di/ 'visible'  
 d. *yvþþJ þolk* /folk/ 'yet'  
 e. *rþþy delþ* /dels/ 'zero'

## 2.2.2 Phonological Changes

Placeholder

## 2.2.3 Syllable Parsing

Placeholder

## 2.2.4 Number of Syllables per Word

Placeholder

## 2.3 Prosody

Placeholder

### 2.3.1 Syllable Weight

Placeholder

### 2.3.2 Word Stress

Placeholder

### 2.3.3 Intonation

Placeholder

## 2.4 Orthography

Placeholder

# Morphological Typology

Now that Tavonic, Alnuric, and Redodhic's phonologies have been defined in chapter 2, this chapter will discuss the next larger unit of language: morphemes. A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit in a language. A morpheme can be a root, or it can be another element that affects or modifies the meaning of a root. Further, a morpheme may be freestanding, or it may be bound to other morphemes to form a larger word.

The discussion will begin with a general explanation of the Tavonic family's morphological typology. Following this will be a brief summary of the various morphological processes that occur in the languages, ending with an explanation of the locus of marking.

## 3.1 Morphological Typology

Traditional research would show that Tavonic is typologically partially isolating and partially fusional, meaning that morphemes are often either separated into distinct words or fused together such that a single phonological unit represents several morphemes. However, according to Bickel and Nichols,

Recent research has shown that such a scale [ranging from isolating to agglutinative to fusional to introflexive] conflates many different typological variables and incorrectly assumes that these parameters covary universally.<sup>1</sup> Three prominent variables involved in this are phonological fusion, formative exponence, and flexibility (i.e. allomorphy, inflectional classes).<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, we will examine each of these areas—phonological fusion, formative exponence, and flexibility, as well as the degree of synthesis—separately.

<sup>1</sup>Frans Plank, "Split Morphology: how Agglutination and Flexion Mix," *Linguistic Typology* 3 (1999): 279–340; Balthasar Bickel and Johanna Nichols, "Inflectional Morphology," in *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*, ed. Timothy Shopen, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>2</sup>Balthasar Bickel and Johanna Nichols, "Fusion of Selected Inflectional Formatives," in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <http://wals.info/chapter/20>.

### 3.1.1 Phonological Fusion

Tavonic's phonological formatives are partially fusional, being partially "isolating" and partially "concatenative".<sup>3</sup> The concatenative morphemes are phonologically bound, requiring a "host word" with which they form one single phonological word, while the isolating morphemes are "full-fledged phonological words of their own".

Verbs are almost exclusively concatenative, with tense, aspect, and mood morphemes attached directly to the verb's stem.

- (1) a. **qlqm̩c**  
*ufuli*  
/u'fu.li/  
  
*uf-uli*  
sing-INF  
  
'to sing'
- b. **qlqbt̪c̩**  
*Ufunte!*  
/u'fun.te/  
  
*uf-unte*  
sing-IMP  
  
'Sing!'
- c. **þvþ qlg̩j:**  
*Mon ufuk.*  
/'mon u'fuk/  
  
*mon uf-uk*  
IS.TOP sing-IND.PST.PFV  
  
'I sang.'

Example 1 shows how morphemes are attached to the stem of a verb through suffixes, rather than with separate (isolating) modifying words or nonlinear ablaut or tone modifications.

Example 1c similarly shows how personal pronouns are fusional. Example 2 demonstrates further how each personal pronoun simultaneously indicates the person, number, animacy in the third person, case, and whether it is the topic.

- (2) a. **þvŋ̩ mor /mor/** 'I' (IS.ABS)
- b. **ðɔt̪vþ þeton /θe'ton/** 'you' (2P.ACC)
- c. **þcbzɔŋ̩ ginsek /gin'sek/** 'to it' (3PC.IN.TOP.DAT)

This concatenation appears not only in inflectional morphology, but also in derivational morphology. For example, the word **z3m̩g̩t̪c̩ ablutik /a.blu'tik/** 'kitten' is formed from the root noun **z3m̩g̩**

<sup>3</sup>Bickel and Nichols, "Fusion of Selected Inflectional Formatives."

*ablu /a'blu/* ‘cat’ with a diminutive suffix attached (*ablu-DIM*). Similarly, the word *žl̥ŋz̥cn̥ akradir* /ak.ra'dir/ ‘pen’ is formed from the root verb *žl̥ŋz̥m̥c akrali* /ak'ra.li/ ‘to write’ with a nominalizing suffix (*akra-NMZ*).

Nouns, on the other hand, are exclusively isolating. All grammatical markings, including number, gender, case, and topicality, are indicated using phonologically separate prepositions.

- (3) a. **bv žl̥ŋz̥vb žŋgd̥:**

*No akrakon aruþ.*

/no ak.ra'kon a'ruθ/

*no= akrakon ar-uþ*

AN.SG.TOP.ABS= writer stand-IND.NPST.PRG

‘The writer is standing.’

- b. **čzv̥b þvð̥c̥z̥ c̥m̥z̥c̥ yg̥z̥ J̥b̥ 3v̥7ŋ̥z̥ r̥n̥z̥:**

*Eson moþes elbi šus ken botra draš.*

/e'son mo,θes el'bi 'ʃus ken bot'ra 'draʃ/

*Ø= eson moþes= elbi šus ken= botra dr-aš*

AN.SG.ABS= farmer IN.PC.TOP.ACC= egg 3S.AN.GEN AN.PL.DAT= wife give-IND.NPST.RTSP

‘The farmer has given the eggs to his wife.’

Notice in example 3 how every noun is preceded by a preposition that identifies that noun’s grammatical role within the sentence.

### 3.1.2 Formative Exponence

Tavonic has mostly polyexponential formatives, meaning that, in almost all cases, single morphemes express multiple grammatical categories each.<sup>4</sup> Derivational morphemes are all monoexponential while inflectional morphemes are almost exclusively polyexponential.

- (4) **bz̥b 7zqvn̥c̥J̥ vbc̥ qc?**

*Nan tavotik one vi?*

/nan ta.vo'tik o'ne vi/

*nan= tavo-tik on-e =vi*

AN.PL.TOP= person-DIM play-IND.NPST.IPFV =Q

‘Do children play?’

Example 4 includes one derivational morpheme and three inflectional morphemes attached to the roots *7zqvn̥ tavo* and *vbc̥m̥c oneli*, two of which are polyexponential. The preposition *bz̥b nan* is a polyexponential morpheme that identifies the preceding noun’s gender (animate), number (plural),

<sup>4</sup>Balthasar Bickel and Johanna Nichols, “Exponence of Selected Inflectional Formatives,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <http://wals.info/chapter/21>.

and topicality. The affix **-7CJ** *-tik*, a diminutive that derives the word ‘child’ from the root ‘person’, is a monoexponential derivational suffix. The single-letter suffix **-ɔ** *-e* attaches to the verb to express the mood (indicative), tense (nonpast), and aspect (imperfective). Finally, the word **qc** *vi* is a monoexponential interrogative clitic that turns the sentence into a question.

Noun prepositions can additionally encode case. In example 4, the noun **7Zqv7CJ** *tavotik* is inferred to be in the absolute case despite being unmarked for it. In many other situations, this grammatical case is additionally encoded within the same polyexponential preposition. In example 3b, the word **þvðɔ3** *mōþes* indicates that the noun ‘egg’ is inanimate, paucal, the topic, and in the accusative case.

One noun preposition, **bq7** *nut* has not fully cumulated, with the noun’s number being still separated into a distinct segment.

- (5) a. **bq7** *nut-Ø* /nut/ (AN.TOP.ACC-SG)  
b. **bq7v3** *nut-os* /nu'tos/ (AN.TOP.ACC-PC)  
c. **bq7vb** *nut-on* /nu'ton/ (AN.TOP.ACC-PL)

All other noun prepositions are fully cumulated and cannot be separated into their component morphemes.

- (6) a. Inanimate Ergative  
i. **ðz** *ða* /ða/ (IN.SG.ERG)  
ii. **ðɔ3** *ðes* /ðes/ (IN.PC.ERG)  
iii. **rqb** *dun* /dun/ (IN.PL.ERG)  
b. Inanimate Topic Dative  
i. **þvp** *mok* /mox/ (IN.SG.TOP.DAT)  
ii. **þɔJv3** *mekos* /me'kos/ (IN.PC.TOP.DAT)  
iii. **bcJgb** *nikun* /ni 'kun/ (IN.PL.TOP.DAT)

### 3.1.3 Flexivity

Tavonic nouns, adjectives, and verbs display flexivity, which means that these words are divided into separate classes that receive distinct inflectional allomorphs. On such allomorphs, otherwise identical morphemes take distinct phonological shapes.

Nouns are divided into animate and inanimate genders. These two genders determine which prepositions are used to provide the grammatical context of the noun.

- (7) a. **ŋc 3cm7**  
*ri bilt*  
/ri 'bilt/  
  
*ri=              bilt*  
AN.PC.ABS= breath  
  
'breaths'

b. የጊዜኑ

*l'eðer*

/le'ðer/

*le=eðer*

IN.PL.ABS=pen

‘pens’

In example 7, both የጊዜን *bilt* and የጊዜኑ *eðer* are marked for the paucal number and the absolute case, but because የጊዜን *bilt* is animate and የጊዜኑ *eðer* is inanimate, the shape of the prepositions are entirely different.

Although they are distinct, the shapes are often more closely related than in example 7. Example 8 shows the animate and inanimate forms of the plural ergative preposition; the relation between the two forms is much clearer, as only the vowel changes.

(8) a. የጊዜን

*din bilt*

/din 'bilt/

*din= bilt*

AN.PL.ERG= breath

‘breaths’

b. የጊዜኑ

*dun eðer*

/dun e'ðer/

*dun= eðer*

IN.PL.ERG= pen

‘pens’

Nouns do not show possessive flexibility, as there is no possessive classification.<sup>5</sup> There is only one method of forming a possessive relationship: using the genitive case.

Adjectives also show flexibility since they decline to match the gender of the noun they modify. Each adjective has a distinct animate and inanimate form, with animate adjectives ending in -*z* -*a*, -*c* -*i*, or -*q* -*u* and inanimate adjectives ending in -*o* -*e* or -*v* -*o*.

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<sup>5</sup>Johanna Nichols and Balthasar Bickel, “Possessive Classification,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <http://wals.info/chapter/59>.

- (9) a. ՅՈ ԼԻՇԲՐԸ ՅՑՄՅԴ  
*su frandi bilt*  
 /su fran'di 'bilt/  
 su=            *frandi*      *bilt*  
 AN.SG.GEN= visible.AN breath  
 'of the visible breath'
- b. ՅՎ ԼԻՇԲՐՎ ՅՇԵՐ  
*šo frando eðer*  
 /ʃo fran'do e'ðer/  
 šo=            *frando*      *eðer*  
 IN.SG.GEN= visible.IN pen  
 'of the visible pen'

In example 9, the form of ԼԻՇԲՐԸ *frandi* changes depending on whether it is modifying an animate noun like ՅՑՄՅԴ *bilt* or an inanimate noun like ՅՇԵՐ *eðer*.

Verbs are divided into three distinct conjugation classes, each identified by the infinitive form. Class I verb infinitives end in -ՑՄԸ -ali, class II verb infinitives end in -ՇՄԸ -eli, and class III verb infinitives end in -ԹՑՄԸ -uli.

- (10) a. Class I: ՅՆԳԳՁՇՑՄԸ *brupat-ali* /bru.θa'ta.li/ 'to handle' (handle-INF)  
 b. Class II: ՅՇՄԸ *š-eli* /'ʃe.li/ 'to run' (run-INF)  
 c. Class III: ԴՇՑՑՄԸ *teg-uli* /te'gu.li/ 'to worry' (worry-INF)

Beyond just the form of the infinitive, the verb's class determines the entire conjugation paradigm for that verb.

- (11) a. Class I: ՅՆԳԳՁՇՑՅՅՑ *brupat-abe* /bru.θa'ta.be/ 'handling' (handle-ACT.PTCP)  
 b. Class II: ՅՇՅՅՑ *š-iba* /'ʃi.ba/ 'running' (run-ACT.PTCP)  
 c. Class III: ԴՇՑՑՅՅՑ *teg-ube* /te'gu.be/ 'worrying' (worry-ACT.PTCP)

As shown in example 11, the same inflection takes a different form when attached to a verb of a different class. To form the active participle, ՅՆԳԳՁՇՑՄԸ *brupatali* becomes ՅՆԳԳՁՇՑՅՅՑ *brupatabe* and ԴՇՑՑՄԸ *teguli* becomes ԴՇՑՑՅՅՑ *tegube*. Following this pattern, one might expect ՅՇՄԸ *šeli* to become \*ՅՇՅՅՑ \**šebe*, but instead it becomes ՅՇՅՅՑ *šiba*.

### 3.1.4 Synthesis

As discussed in subsection 3.1.1, derivation and verb inflection occurs by attaching affixes to a stem or root, forming singular phonological words. Meanwhile, noun declension occurs using prepositions that mark the grammatical information for the noun. These prepositions are separate phonological words from the nouns themselves.

In all cases, however, inflected forms constitute singular *syntactic* words because the inflections cannot be separated or reordered at all. This means that Tavonic morphology is synthetic.<sup>6</sup>

Tavonic verbs normally inflect to show mood, tense, and aspect, a total of three morpheme categories per word. The maximally inflected form adds negation, a particle that is a separate phonological word but remains a part of the syntactic word of the verb, bringing Tavonic's category-per-word ratio up to 4.<sup>7</sup>

- (12) **ygb vbcJ ʒv:**

*Šun onek bo.*

/'ʃun o'nek bo/

šun            on-ek            -bo  
3s.AN.TOP play-IND.PST.PFV -NEG

‘S/he did not play.’

## 3.2 Morphological Processes

Tavonic is “predominantly suffixing”<sup>8</sup> and primarily makes use of suffixes and clitics to derive and inflect words. The language does not employ infixation, stem modification, or supraflection, no prefixation has yet been identified, and reduplication only appears in wordplay and child-directed speech.

### 3.2.1 Suffixation

Suffixes in Tavonic apply mainly to verbs. All verbal inflections occur via the addition of suffixes, whether phonologically bound or not. This is illustrated in example 13.

- (13) a. **yvbz bcz ʒlŋzd:**

*Šona git akrág.*

/ʃo'na git ak'r̥ay/

šona            git            akr-ač  
3p.AN.TOP 3s.IN.ACC write-IND.PST.RTSP

‘They had written it.’

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<sup>6</sup>Balthasar Bickel and Johanna Nichols, “Inflectional Synthesis of the Verb,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <http://wals.info/chapter/22>.

<sup>7</sup>Bickel and Nichols.

<sup>8</sup>Matthew S. Dryer, “Prefixing vs. Suffixing in Inflectional Morphology,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <http://wals.info/chapter/26>.

b. **þvb3z glg7 vd bcJc3:***Monsa ufut oþ nikis.**/mon'sa u'fut oθ ni'kis/**monsə uf-ut                            oþ nik-is  
1pc.TOP sing-IND.NPST.PFV if be.able-SBJV.NPST.IPFV*

'We will sing if we are able.'

c. **g3vþ3z ɿŋjzLc3***usombe akrasis**/u'som.be ak.ra'pis/**us-ombe                                 akrasis  
hold-PASS.PTCP.IN letter*

'held letter'

d. **þc ðŋv ɿŋvnŋbz7z:***Mi þro akrorganta.**/mi 'θro ak.ror'gan.ta/**mi                    þro                    akrorg-anta  
IN.SG.TOP that.MED erase-IMP*

'Erase that.'

e. **þzb7 Jzb7cb7z 3v:***Mana kantenta bo.**/ma'na kan'ten.ta bo/**mana kant-ent-a -bo  
1p.TOP thank-IMP -NEG*

'Don't thank us.'

As discussed in subsection 3.1.4, although the particle 3v *bo* is a separate phonological word, it functions syntactically as a suffix. This is shown in example 13e where it attaches to the verb Jzb7cb7z *kantenta* to negate it.

Suffixes are also present on adjectives, though only minimally. Adjectives take one of two vowel endings to mark the gender of its referent, with animate adjectives ending in -C -i, -Z -a, or -Q -u and inanimate adjectives ending in -C -e or -V -o.

- (14) a. ɿ3mgbbz *ablunga* /ab.lun'ga/ (AN) vs. ɿ3mgbbz *ablunge* /ab.lun'ge/ (IN) 'catlike'  
 b. ɿŋzbrc *akrandi* /ak.ran'di/ (AN) vs. ɿŋzbrv *akrando* /ak.ran'do/ (IN) 'writable'  
 c. ɿŋqdzmz *brujatla* /bru.θat'la/ (AN) vs. ɿŋqdzm̩v *brujatlo* /bru.θat'lo/ (IN) 'manual'  
 d. ɿŋzðnq *fraþru* /fraθ'ru/ (AN) vs. ɿŋzðn̩v *fraþro* /fraθ'ro/ (IN) 'observant'

Suffixation also occurs regularly in derivational inflection. In fact, several derivational suffixes can be strung together to derive yet more words. Example 15 shows this process.

- (15) a. **lɪŋzmc** *frali* /'fra.li/ ‘to see’  
      b. **lɪŋzqɔp** *fravem* /fra'vem/ ‘sight’  
      c. **lɪŋzqɔpɔc7mɔz** *fravemitla -v -o* /fra.vem.it'la/ ‘visual’  
      d. **vbz** *onaš* /o'naʃ/ ‘rug’  
      e. **vbzgɔmɔc** *onašuli* /o.na'su.li/ ‘to place’  
      f. **vbzcbzgɔmɔc** *onašinsuli* /o.na.sin'su.li/ ‘to re-place’

In example 15f, the **-cb3** *-ins* affix may not immediately appear to be a suffix, however it should be noted that it is being attached to the end of the *stem* of the word, which is **vbz**- *onaš*-, prior to the verb’s infinitive ending **-gɔmɔc** *-uli*, which is an *inflectional* suffix.

### 3.2.2 Cliticization

Clitics can be difficult to define in a formal way, and it is therefore worthwhile to explain how certain morphemes in Tavonic can be classified as such.

A ‘clitic’ is often characterized as “a ‘small’, prosodically weak, or non-prominent word which fails to respect normal principles of syntactic distribution because it requires a host to which it can attach phonologically”.<sup>9</sup> Clitics are different from affixes in that they will typically “cliticize ‘promiscuously’ to a word of any old category, including uninflectable words which otherwise fail to take any affixes whatever”,<sup>10</sup> whereas affixes are limited to only specific parts of speech to which they can connect.<sup>11</sup> Yet, they are different from function words in that they are bound, that is they do not have the free ordering afforded to words.<sup>12</sup>

The primary example of clitics in Tavonic is the noun prepositions. These particles cannot appear alone, conveying solely grammatical, not lexical, information. They are not affixes because they attach to the beginning of the entire noun phrase, no matter what word comes after, rather than attaching directly to the head noun.

- (16) a. **bvr bz3 vjv lɪŋz:**  
          *Mod nas oko fra.*  
          */mod nas o'ko 'fra/*  
          *mod   nas=       oko fr-a*  
          *IS.ERG AN.PC.TOP dog see-IND.NPST.IPFV*  
          ‘I see the dogs.’

<sup>9</sup>Andrew Spencer and Ana Luís, “The Canonical Clitic,” chap. 6 in *Canonical Morphology and Syntax*, by Dunstan Brown, Marina Chumakina, and Greville G. Corbett (2012), 123–150, ISBN: 9780199604326, accessed November 25, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199604326.001.0001>, [https://www.academia.edu/4379177/The\\_canonical\\_clitic\\_With\\_Ana\\_Lu%C3%A1s\\_CDs\\_.pdf](https://www.academia.edu/4379177/The_canonical_clitic_With_Ana_Lu%C3%A1s_CDs_.pdf).

<sup>10</sup>Spencer and Luís.

<sup>11</sup>Arnold M. Zwicky and Geoffrey K. Pullum, “Cliticization vs. Inflection: English N’T,” *Language* 59, no. 3 (1983): 503–505, accessed November 25, 2018, <https://web.stanford.edu/~zwicky/ZPCliticsInfl.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup>Arnold M. Zwicky, “Clitics and Particles,” *Language* 61, no. 2 (1985): 286–290, accessed November 25, 2018, <http://babel.ucsc.edu/-hank/mrg.readings/zwicky1985.pdf>.

b. þvṛ bżʒ ənṛz vJv lṇz:

*Mod nas urda oko fra.*

/'mod nas ur'da o'ko 'fra/

*mod nas= urd-a oko fr-a*

*IS.ERG AN.PC.TOP protected-AN dog see-IND.NPST.IPFV*

'I see the protected dogs.'

c. þvṛ bżʒ 7ɔɔzən ənṛz vJv lṇz:

*Mod nas tesar urda oko fra.*

/'mod nas te'sar ur'da o'ko 'fra/

*mod nas= tesar urd-a oko fr-a*

*IS.ERG AN.PC.TOP 2pc.GEN protected-AN dog see-IND.NPST.IPFV*

'I see your protected dogs.'

d. þvṛ bżʒ ɔg ɔɔvb ənṛz vJv lṇz:

*Mod nas su eson urda oko fra.*

/'mod nas su e'son ur'da o'ko 'fra/

*mod nas= su= eson urd-aoko fr-a*

*IS.ERG AN.PC.TOP AN.SG.GEN farmer protected-AN dog see-IND.NPST.IPFV*

'I see the farmer's protected dogs.'

Notice in example 16 how the particle **bżʒ nas** directly precedes the entire noun phrase, even when separated from the head noun by an adjective (16b), a pronoun (16c), and even another modifying noun and its preposition (16d).

In some cases, the noun prepositions reduce phonologically and attach to the following word. Any time a noun preposition ends with the same vowel with which the following word begins, that vowel is dropped and the preposition is attached orthographically to the following word with an apostrophe.

- (17) a. mɔ̄ cđcəŋ *le eðer* → m'cđcəŋ *l'eðer* /le'ðer/ 'pens' (IN.PC.ABS-pen)
- b. þżyc cbżb *mati inam* → þży'cbżb *mat'inam* /ma.ti'nam/ 'location' (IN.SG.TOP.ACC-location)
- c. bV vJv no oko → b'vJv n'oko /no'ko/ 'dog' (AN.SG.TOP-pen)
- d. ɔg ənṛz zʒmɔ̄ su urda ablu → ɔ'gənṛz zʒmɔ̄ s'urda ablu /sur'da ab'lū/ 'of the protected cat' (AN.SG.GEN-protected-AN cat)

This phonological reduction occurs no matter whether the following word is the noun the preposition is modifying or not. For example, notice in example 17d that the preposition attaches itself to **ənṛz urda** even though it is an adjective modifying the noun **zʒmɔ̄ ablu**.

The other main example of cliticization is the particle **qc vi**. It is used to ask questions and is most often added at the end of a sentence after the verb, as shown in example 18.

- (18) **bv yɔ̃vb 79 lηzðηg vJv g3g qc?**

*No šekon tu fraþru oko usu vi?*

/no ſe'kon tu fraθ'ru o'ko u'su vi/

*no= ſe'kon tu= fraþr-u oko us-u =vi  
AN.SG.TOP= runner AN.SG.ACC= observant-AN dog have-IND.NPST.IPFV =Q*

'Does the runner have an observant dog?'

A speaker can, however, move the interrogative particle earlier in the sentence to focus the question on some specific element.

- (19) a. **bv yɔ̃vb qc 79 lηzðηg vJv g3g?**

*No šekon vi tu fraþru oko usu?*

/no ſe'kon vi tu fraθ'ru o'ko u'su/

*no= ſe'kon =vi tu= fraþr-u oko us-u  
AN.SG.TOP= runner =Q AN.SG.ACC= observant-AN dog have-IND.NPST.IPFV*

'Is it the runner who has an observant dog?'

- b. **bv yɔ̃vb 79 lηzðηg qc vJv g3g?**

*No šekon tu fraþru vi oko usu?*

/no ſe'kon tu fraθ'ru vi o'ko u'su/

*no= ſe'kon tu= fraþr-u =vi oko us-u  
AN.SG.TOP= runner AN.SG.ACC= observant-AN =Q dog have-IND.NPST.IPFV*

'Is it an *observant* dog the runner has?'

- c. **bv yɔ̃vb 79 lηzðηg vJv qc g3g?**

*No šekon tu fraþru oko vi usu?*

/no ſe'kon tu fraθ'ru o'ko vi u'su/

*no= ſe'kon tu= fraþr-u oko =vi us-u  
AN.SG.TOP= runner AN.SG.ACC= observant-AN dog =Q have-IND.NPST.IPFV*

'Is it an *observant dog* the runner has?'

### 3.3 Locus of Marking

Tavonic is almost exclusively dependent-marking.<sup>13</sup> This can readily be seen in the expression of possessive relationships, where the dependent is marked with the genitive case.

<sup>13</sup>Johanna Nichols and Balthasar Bickel, "Locus of Marking: Whole-language Typology," in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <http://wals.info/chapter/25>.

(20) a. 7ɔ3 3v7ŋz

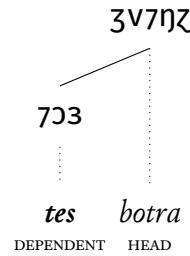
*tes botra*

/'tes bot'ra/

*tes*      *botra*

2S.GEN wife

'your wife'



b. 3g ɔ3v3cy 3v7ŋz

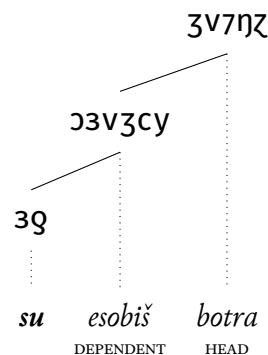
*su esobiš botra*

/su e.so'biʃ bot'ra/

*su=*      *esobiš*      *botra*

AN.SG.GEN= patriot wife

'the patriot's wife'



In example 20a, 'you' are grammatically in possession of 3v7ŋz *botra* 'wife'; the possessee forms the head of the phrase while it is modified by the possessor, which receives the genitive inflection. In example 20b, 3v7ŋz *botra* is still the possessee and thus the head of the phrase while the genitive is marked on the dependent, ɔ3v3cy *esobiš* 'patriot', using a noun preposition.

Tavonic also shows dependent marking when modifying nouns with adjectives.

(21) ŋzb pzmvbλz 3v7ŋz

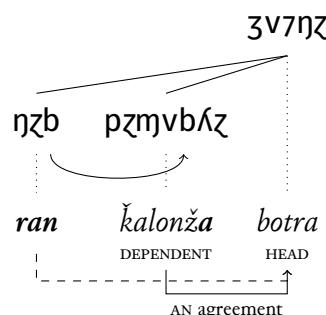
*ran kalonža botra*

/ran xa.lon'ža bot'ra/

*ran=*      *kalonž-a*      *botra*

AN.PL.ABS= husbandless-AN woman

'husbandless women'



In example 21, while the head noun 3v7ŋz *botra* is marked for animacy with ŋzb *ran*, the dependent modifying adjective pzmvbλz *kalonža* 'husbandless' takes the -z -a animate ending to match.

At the clause level, Tavonic is solely dependent-marking. Verbs have no grammatical inflections that indicate the grammatical role of any noun phrases within the clause, with that information being marked only on the verb's dependents, the noun phrases.

- (22) a.
- þvb զՅՅ:**

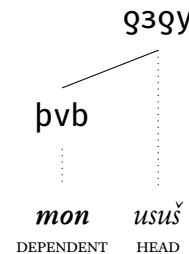
*Mon usuš.*

/'mon u'suʃ/

*mon us-uš*

IS.TOP sing-IND.NPST.RTSP

'I have sung.'



- b.
- þvb դՇ լՇ:**

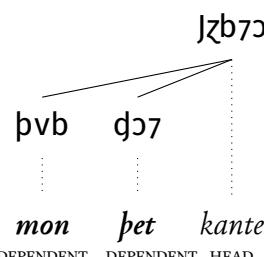
*Mon het kante.*

/'mon 'θet kan'te/

*mon het kant-e*

IS.TOP 2S.ACC thank-IND.NPST.IMP

'I thank you.'



- c.
- բՀ ՀՈՅ զՅՅ:**

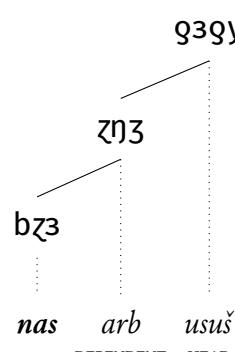
*Nas arb usuš.*

/nas 'arb u'suʃ/

*nas= arb us-uš*

AN.PC.TOP= bird sing-IND.NPST.RTSP

'The birds have sung.'



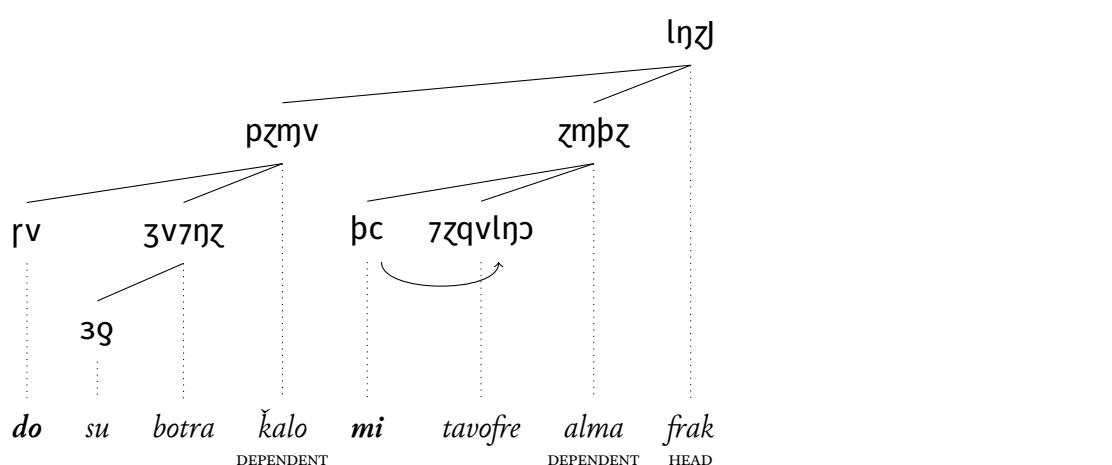
- d.
- ՐՎ ՅՋ ՅՎԴՈՒ ԲՀՄՆ ԲԸ ԴՀԳՎԼԻՒ ՀՄԲՀ ԼԻՇ:**

*Do su botra kalo mi tavofre alma frak.*

/do su bot'ra xa'lo mi ta.vof re al'ma 'frak/

*do= su= botra kalo mi= tavofr-e alma fr-ak*  
 AN.SG.ERG= AN.SG.GEN= woman husband IN.SG.TOP= inhabited-IN house see-IND.PST.PFV

'The woman's husband saw the inhabited house.'



In example 22a, the pronoun **pvb** *mon* is declined to indicate it is the topic of the sentence while the verb **q3qy** *usuč*, despite conjugating for mood, tense, and aspect, is not marked for this role. Example 22b similarly marks the two pronouns **pvb** *mon* and **qɔ7** *bet* for their roles in the sentence as topic and object while the verb **lzb7ɔ** *kante* does not inflect to indicate these roles. When nouns are used instead of pronouns, as in examples 22c–d, the nouns are marked for their grammatical role by their prepositions, their own dependents, while the head verb remains unmarked for these roles.

# Grammatical Categories

Tavonic words can be divided into several different categories, or parts of speech. While the previous chapter dealt with the general mechanisms of marking words, this chapter will examine each of the various parts of speech in order to define their morphology more closely. The discussion will begin with an examination of nouns, pronouns, and verbs. Following this will be a discussion of the remaining parts of speech, including adverbs, numerals, and conjunctions.

## 4.1 Nouns

Nouns in Tavonic decline to express number and gender (animacy) and are marked for case to indicate their grammatical role within the clause. As discussed in chapter 3, this inflection takes place not directly on the noun itself but on prepositional clitics that convey this grammatical meaning.<sup>1</sup> For a full illustration of the declension paradigms, compare Table 4.1 and Table 4.2. As shown in these tables, Tavonic noun inflections are never syncretic.<sup>2</sup>

### 4.1.1 Proper Names and Common Nouns

Common nouns are those that behave in a prototypical way with regards to their morphology and syntax. On the other hand, “[p]roper names are nouns that are used to address and identify particular persons or culturally significant personages or places. Proper names are used to refer to specific individuals both speaker and hearer can identify, therefore they do not usually appear with... modifiers, possessors, [identifying] relative clauses, or other devices that render nouns more identifiable.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Matthew S. Dryer, “Position of Case Affixes,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <https://wals.info/chapter/51>.

<sup>2</sup>Matthew Baerman and Dunstan Brown, “Case Syncretism,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <http://wals.info/chapter/28>.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas E. Payne, *Describing Morphosyntax: A Guide for Field Linguists* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 39, ISBN: 0-521-58805-7, <http://www.cambridge.org/vi/academic/subjects/languages-linguistics/grammar-and-syntax/describing-morphosyntax-guide-field-linguists>.

Table 4.1: Tavonic Animate Noun Declension Paradigm for the word ՅՀՈՋՅ ՅՀՈՋՅ *bruþa* ‘hand’ or ‘tool’

Case	SG	PC	PL
<b>ABS</b>	<i>bruþa</i>	<i>ri bruþa</i>	<i>ran bruþa</i>
<b>ERG</b>	<i>do bruþa</i>	<i>das bruþa</i>	<i>din bruþa</i>
<b>ACC</b>	<i>tu bruþa</i>	<i>tos bruþa</i>	<i>ton bruþa</i>
<b>DAT</b>	<i>ke bruþa</i>	<i>kas bruþa</i>	<i>ken bruþa</i>
<b>GEN</b>	<i>su bruþa</i>	<i>sar bruþa</i>	<i>san bruþa</i>
<b>TOP</b>	<i>no bruþa</i>	<i>nas bruþa</i>	<i>nan bruþa</i>
<b>TOP.ACC</b>	<i>nut bruþa</i>	<i>nutos bruþa</i>	<i>nuton bruþa</i>
<b>TOP.DAT</b>	<i>nek bruþa</i>	<i>nekas bruþa</i>	<i>naken bruþa</i>
<b>TOP.GEN</b>	<i>nus bruþa</i>	<i>nosar bruþa</i>	<i>nosan bruþa</i>

Table 4.2: Tavonic Inanimate Noun Declension Paradigm for the word ՅՉՅ ՅՉՅ *šem* ‘busyness’

Case	SG	PC	PL
<b>ABS</b>	<i>šem</i>	<i>le šem</i>	<i>ren šem</i>
<b>ERG</b>	<i>ða šem</i>	<i>ðes šem</i>	<i>dun šem</i>
<b>ACC</b>	<i>ti šem</i>	<i>þis šem</i>	<i>ten šem</i>
<b>DAT</b>	<i>ko šem</i>	<i>kos šem</i>	<i>kun šem</i>
<b>GEN</b>	<i>šo šem</i>	<i>se šem</i>	<i>šen šem</i>
<b>TOP</b>	<i>mi šem</i>	<i>mes šem</i>	<i>nun šem</i>
<b>TOP.ACC</b>	<i>mati šem</i>	<i>møþes šem</i>	<i>noten šem</i>
<b>TOP.DAT</b>	<i>mok šem</i>	<i>mekos šem</i>	<i>nikun šem</i>
<b>TOP.GEN</b>	<i>miš šem</i>	<i>mise šem</i>	<i>nušen šem</i>

- | (i) Proper names       | Common nouns        |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| a. ՌՈՆՆԵ               | լշմր                |
| <i>Ronne</i>           | <i>fild</i>         |
| ‘Ronne’                | ‘doll’              |
| b. ՅԱ ՌՈՆՆԵ            | պՎ լշմր             |
| <i>ke Ronne</i>        | <i>ko fild</i>      |
| ‘to Ronne’             | ‘to the doll’       |
| c. ՐՈՆՆԵՐ              | մՅ լշմր             |
| <i>ri Ronne</i>        | <i>le fild</i>      |
| ‘Ronne and associates’ | ‘a few dolls’       |
| d. ՅԻՅՅԵՐԸ ՐՈՆՆԵ       | չիյՅԵ լշմր          |
| <i>arsi Ronne</i>      | <i>arsi fild</i>    |
| ‘three Ronnes’         | ‘three dolls’       |
| e. ՅՅԱՄՅԵՐԸ ՐՈՆՆԵ      | չչմյՅԵՐՎ լշմր       |
| <i>ablutla Ronne</i>   | <i>ablutlo fild</i> |
| ‘a feline Ronne’       | ‘a feline doll’     |

f.  þvŋ ʒg lŋzd lŋt ñvbbč mor suk frag put Ronne 'the Ronne that I had seen'	þvŋ bŋč lŋzd lŋt lcmr mor gake frag put fild 'the doll that I had seen'
--	---

In all of the examples above, the treatment of the common noun *fild* is perfectly acceptable. However, whenever the noun is modified in some way, such as by specifying the number, adding a descriptive adjective, or adding an identifying relative clause, such as in examples 1d–f, the treatment of the proper name *Ronne* is questionable. These expressions are possible, but the context must be such that the specific referent is not automatically identifiable, which is unusual for proper names. Meanwhile, using the paucal or plural form with a proper name, such as in example 1c, changes the meaning to signify the proper name *and their associates*. See more about the associative plural in subsection 4.1.3.

## 4.1.2 Gender

Grammatical gender in Tavonic consists of two<sup>4</sup> non-sex-based<sup>5</sup> classes based primarily on semantic ontological properties.<sup>6</sup> The animate gender refers primarily to entities that are considered alive or are associated with life, movement, change, or dynamism. The inanimate gender refers primarily to entities that are not alive and are generally stationary or abstract. Grammatical gender in Tavonic can also be referred to as “animacy” since that is what the genders denote. Examples of nouns in each gender can be seen in example 2.

(2) a. Animate nouns:

ʒvŋz botra ‘woman’; pzm̩v kalo ‘man’; ɔzvb̩ eson ‘farmer’; vʃvŋč okotik ‘puppy’; ɔŋrɔŋcm̩ urdatil ‘ward’; ʒcm̩t bilt ‘breath’

b. Inanimate nouns:

ɔzvŋč esotik ‘country’; rɔrg dedu ‘sky’; ɔm̩z̩ elbi ‘egg’; ɔzɔŋčn̩ usudir ‘basket’; ʒŋzlc̩ akrasis ‘letter’; lŋzrc̩ fradir ‘glasses’

Since the nouns themselves are not directly inflected, with grammatical information instead shown on prepositional particles, it is impossible to tell what gender a noun is based solely on its word form.

Some nouns are able to change category in certain circumstances. For example, plants and animals switch from the animate gender to the inanimate gender when they serve as food. Further, there exist some duplicates with otherwise identical words declining to opposite genders.

<sup>4</sup>Greville G. Corbett, “Number of Genders,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <http://wals.info/chapter/30>.

<sup>5</sup>Greville G. Corbett, “Sex-based and Non-sex-based Gender Systems,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <https://wals.info/chapter/31>.

<sup>6</sup>Greville G. Corbett, “Systems of Gender Assignment,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <https://wals.info/chapter/32>.

### 4.1.3 Number

Grammatical number in Tavonic consists of three numbers, all of which are coded on the noun prepositions.<sup>7</sup> The singular is always used when there is only one of the referent noun, the pausal is used when there are two to five of the referent noun, and the plural is used when there are more than five of the referent noun.

- (3) a. 39 cþz *su ima* /su i'ma/ ‘of mother’ (SG.AN.GEN= mother)
- b. 3Zñ cþz *sar ima* /sar i'ma/ ‘of (some) mothers’ (PC.AN.GEN= mother)
- c. 3Zb cþz *san ima* /san i'ma/ ‘of (several) mothers’ (PL.AN.GEN= mother)

When a numeral is used to identify the number of a referent noun, the singular is used instead of the pausal or plural, even if without the numeral the other forms would be used.<sup>8</sup>

- (4) a. J'cð cþz *k'ep ima* /keθ i'ma/ ‘to one mother’ (SG.AN.DAT=one mother)
- b. Jc 3ñ3c cþz *ke arsi ima* /ke ar'si i'ma/ ‘to three mothers’ (SG.AN.DAT= three mother), not \*JZ3 3ñ3c cþz \*kas arsi ima
- c. Jc 3ñgð z3vþ cþz *ke bruð abom ima* /ke bruð a'bom i'ma/ ‘to seven mothers’ (SG.AN.DAT= five two mother), not \*Jcb 3ñgð z3vþ cþz \*ken bruð abom ima

Most nouns that represent concrete entities are countable, including some words that in English are uncountable like corn, and by default they are used in the singular form unlike English words like pants or glasses. However, many entities that are not easily split into discreet parts like liquids, grains, and certain abstract concepts are uncountable, such as 3m7v *elto* /el'to/ ‘water’. Occasionally, when a word’s semantics cover multiple concepts, a word can be variably countable or uncountable; when rɔrø *dedu* /de'du/ is used to mean ‘sky’ or ‘heaven’, it is uncountable, but when it is used to mean ‘ceiling’, it is countable and can be made pausal or plural.

People’s names can also be declined to the pausal or plural number to indicate the associative plural.<sup>9</sup> This form is used to refer to a person and the other people associated with that person. For example, ñjc 3vñ *ri Bol* /ri bol/ (PC.AN.ABS Bol) refers to Bol and two to five other people associated with him. Similarly, ñzb v7c *ran Ote* /ran o'te/ (PL.AN.ABS Ote) refers to Ote and the group he is with.

<sup>7</sup>Matthew S. Dryer, “Coding of Nominal Plurality,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <https://wals.info/chapter/33>.

<sup>8</sup>Martin Haspelmath, “Occurrence of Nominal Plurality,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <https://wals.info/chapter/34>.

<sup>9</sup>Michael Daniel and Edith Moravcsik, “The Associative Plural,” in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <https://wals.info/chapter/36>.

## 4.1.4 Case

As shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, Tavonic noun phrases decline to five different grammatical cases<sup>10</sup> in order to show their role in the sentence. These cases are governed by the phrase's verb or assigned to adjuncts depending on their purpose or meaning. As shown in the same declension tables, any of these grammatical cases can be replaced by or combined with topic markers. See subsection 4.1.5 for more information on topicality.

### Absolutive and Intransitive

The intransitive case marks a noun or noun phrase that serves as the subject of an intransitive verb like *yɔmɔc šeli* 'to run' or a transitive verb used intransitively like *glɔmɔc ufuli* 'to sing' (without naming the object, what is being sung). This means that when a verb has only a single argument, that argument will by default be in the intransitive case. That is true whether the subject is serving like an agent as in words like *yɔmɔc šeli* 'to run' or *glɔmɔc ufuli* 'to sing' or when the subject is serving more like a patient as in words like *vŋdʒmɔc orðali* 'to fall'.

- (5) a. *þvmmɔŋɔ yɔð:*

*Mollur šeþ.*

/mo'l:ur 'ʃeθ/

$\emptyset = Mollur \ š-eþ$

AN.SG.INTR= Mollur run-IND.NPST.PRG

'Mollur is running.'

- b. *ŋ'cþz glɔ:*

*R'ima ufu.*

/ri'i ma u'fu/

*ri=ima uf-u*

AN.PC.INTR=mother sing-IND.NPST.IPFV

'The mothers sing.'

- c. *ŋɔb lcɔŋɔ vŋðɔl:*

*Ren fild orðak.*

/ren 'fild or'ðak/

*ren= fild orð-ak*

IN.PL.INTR= doll fall-IND.PST.PFV

'The dolls fell.'

Note that the singular intransitive case is entirely unmarked by any preposition. This is true whether the noun is animate or inanimate.

<sup>10</sup>Oliver A. Iggesen, "Number of Cases," in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <https://wals.info/chapter/49>.

- (6) a. զղօթ զմրշչա:

*Alum uldeteš.**/a'lum ul.de'teʃ/**∅= alum uldet-eš*

AN.SG.INTR= cloud change-IND.NPST.RTSP

'The cloud has changed.'

- b. զմիշ զմրշչա:

*Almaþ uldeteš.**/al'maθ ul.de'teʃ/**∅= almaþ uldet-eš*

IN.SG.INTR= village change-IND.NPST.RTSP

'The village has changed.'

However, the subject of certain transitive verbs will also take the intransitive case if the semantic meaning of the verb is stative. See section 4.1.4 Dative for more information on this. Since it is used in these situations, and since the intransitive is the citation form, the case is normally referred to as the absolute case, even when used intransitively. These terms are interchangeable.

- (7) ԵՇ Կ ՀԵՅ ԼԻՀ ՎԸ?

*Ter ke arb fra vi?**/ter ke arb 'fra vi/**ter ke= arb fr-a =vi*  
2S.ABS AN.SG.DAT= bird see-IND.NPST.IPFV =Q

'Do you see a bird?'

The absolute case is frequently used with postpositions to indicate a location where or through which an action is taken, for example being placed at, on, or in something.

- (8) a. ՀՅՄՋ ՎԵՋ Ծ ՎԵՋ:

*Ablu onaš e onek.**/ab'lū o'naʃ e o'nek/**∅= ablu ∅= onaš e on-ek*

AN.SG.ABS= cat IN.SG.ABS= rug on play-IND.PST.PFV

'The cat played on the rug.'

- b. ՊՎՐ ԴԿ ՋԲԲԸՆ ՄՇԿՅՆ ՀՅԼՋ ՃԵՂՅ:

*Mod ti ennis l'elbi arku ȝirak.**/mod ti e'n:is lel'bi ar'ku yi'rak/**mod ti= ennis le=elbi arku ȝir-ak*

IS.ERG IN.SG.ACC= ball IN.PC.ABS=egg above throw-IND.PST.PFV

'I threw the ball over the eggs.'

When an action is done ‘with’ or ‘without’ a noun, the absolute case will be used.

- (9) **vjv չՅՋԾ ի v նԵԾ:**

*Oko ablu mo oneb.*

/o'ko ab'l[u] mo o'neθ/

∅=        *oko*    ∅=        *ablu*    *mo*    *on-eb*

AN.SG.ABS= dog AN.SG.ABS= cat with play-IND.NPST.PRG

‘The dog is playing with the cat.’

The absolute case is also used when directly addressing someone in a vocative function. The noun functioning in this way is often placed at the beginning or end of the sentence separated by a pause in speech or a comma in writing.

- (10) a. **ԹԵՐԿ յԵՑՔԵՑ:**

*Lerk, šebanta.*

/lerk, ſe'ban.ta/

∅=        *Lerk*    *šeb-anta*

AN.SG.ABS= Lerk run-IMP

‘Run, Lerk.’

- b. **ՅՈՒ ՏՅ ՇՎՈՎԵԾ ԳՈՎԵՐԵԾ ԵՐՄԵ:**

*Sud tu tavotik urdateb, Erme.*

/sud tu ta.vo'tik ur.da'teθ er'me/

*sud*        *tu=*        *tavotik*    *urdat-eb*

3S.AN.ERG AN.SG.ACC= child    guard-IND.NPST.PRG

∅=        *Erme*

AN.SG.ABS= Erme

‘He is guarding the child, Erme.’

## Ergative

The ergative case marks a noun or noun phrase that serves as the subject of an active transitive verb or any ditransitive verb. This means that when a verb has multiple arguments and the semantic meaning of the verb is active, the subject argument will by default be in the ergative case.

- (11) a. **ՐՎ ԴՄՈՑԵՐ ԴԵ ՇԼՈՒԾԸ ԾՃՆԵԶ:**

*Do Tlunda ti akrapis eðeraš.*

/do tlun'da ti ak.ra'pis e.ðe'raʃ/

*do=*        *Tlunda*    *ti=*        *akrapis*    *eðer-aš*

AN.SG.ERG= Tlunda IN.SG.ACC= letter pen-IND.NPST.RTSP

‘Tlunda has penned a letter.’

b. የቃ ቤኑ ጽዕንጂ ቤኑንቃ፡

*Das oko tu ablu okotam.*

/das o'ko tu ab'lū o.ko'tam/

*das=       oko   tu=       ablu   okot-am*

*AN.PC.ERG= dog AN.SG.ACC= cat chase-IND.PST.IPFV*

‘The dogs chased the cat.’

c. የርብ ጽጭ ጽው ዓግጥርኝ ዓጭዕድ፡

*Din avo ten usudir visag̊.*

/din a'vo ten u.su'dir vi'say/

*din=       avo   ten=       usudir   vis-ač*

*AN.PL.ERG= father IN.PL.ACC= basket take.away-IND.PST.RTSP*

‘The father and his associates had taken away the baskets.’

## Accusative

The accusative case marks a noun or noun phrase that serves as the direct object of an active transitive verb or any ditransitive verb.

(12) a. የነትነትኩ ፈርማ ዓይነትን ጽምቤት የበሸጋ፡

*Do akrakon bis eðerik alma e onašuk.*

/do ak.ra'kon θis e.ðe'rik al'ma e o.na'ʃuk/

*do=       akrakon   bis=       eðerik   alma   e   onaš-uk*

*AN.SG.ERG= writer   IN.PC.ACC= pencil house in place-IND.PST.PFV*

‘The writer placed the pencils in the house.’

b. የነትነትኩ ጽዕንት የነትነትኩ ዓይነትን ዓይነትን ዓይነትን ዓይነትን፡

*Do šus botra ti šus akrapis uldetuk.*

/do ſus bot'ra ti ſus ak.ra'pis ul.de'tuk/

*do=       šus       botra   ti=       šus       akrapis   uldet-uk*

*AN.SG.ERG= 3p.AN.GEN wife   IN.SG.ACC= 3p.AN.GEN letter   change-IND.PST.PFV*

‘His wife changed his letter.’

## Dative

The dative case marks a noun or noun phrase that serves as the indirect object of a ditransitive verb, a recipient of an action, or the entity for whose benefit or detriment the action is taken.

(13) ወንደውን ጽር ብበርን ጽር አንደ የንግድ:

*Do eson ti ennis ke oko draš.*

/do e'son ti e'n:is ke o'ko 'draʃ/

*do= eson ti= ennis ke= oko dr-aš*  
 AN.SG.ERG= farmer IN.SG.ACC= ball AN.SG.DAT= dog give-IND.NPST.RTSP

‘The farmer has given the dog a ball.’

Certain monotransitive verbs are used with the absolute and dative cases instead of the ergative and accusative cases. These tend to be stative verbs in which the object of the verb is unaffected by the action or there is little volition on the part of the subject.

(14) a. በኩ ጽር ተኩል:

*Mor tek tegu.*

/mor tek te'gu/

*mor tek teg-u*  
 IS.ABS 2S.DAT worry-IND.NPST.IPFV

‘I worry for you.’

b. ኃይል ዓይነትን ጽር ዓይነትን ጽር ፍቃድ:

*Ran urdaton ken ufukon keðam.*

/ran ur.da'ton ken u.fu'kon ke'ðam/

*ran= urdaton ken= ufukon keð-am*  
 AN.PL.ABS= guard AN.PL.DAT= singer admire-IND.PST.IPFV

‘The guards admired the singers.’

When a verb is done on behalf of or for someone or something, the beneficiary of that action will be declined to the dative and followed by the postposition **ንር li /li/** ‘for’.

(15) a. ፳ኛ ገዢ የሱስ ዓይነትን ጽር ዓይነትን:

*Sur kas šus botrašut li ove.*

/sur kas šus bot.ra'ʃut li o've/

*sur kas= šus botrašut li ov-e*  
 3S.AN.ABS AN.PC.DAT= 3S.AN.GEN fiancée for cook-IND.NPST.IPFV

‘He cooks for his fiancée and her friends.’

- b. **ՐՎ ՅՄԾՓՋ 7Ջ ՎԽՎԾ | ՀՅ ՅԳՅ ՅԳՎ ՄԸ ԳՈՒՐՇԵԲ:**

*Do Blimva tu okotik ke šus avo li urdateb.*

/do blim'va tu o.ko'tik ke ſus a'vo li ur.da'teθ/

do=            *Blimva*    tu=            *okotik*    ke=            *šus*            *avo*            *li*  
 AN.SG.ERG=    Blimva    AN.SG.ACC=    puppy    AN.SG.DAT=    3S.AN.GEN    father    for  
*urdat-eb*  
 protect-IND.NPST.PRG

'Blimva is protecting the puppy for her father.'

The dative case can also be used in an allative sense to express movement to or toward.

- (16) **ՊՎԻ ՊՎ ՅՄԺՑ ՅՑՅՑ:**

*Mor ko alma bi šeba.*

/mor xo al'ma bi ſe'ba/

*mor   ko=        alma   to   šeb-a*  
 IS.AN IN.SG.DAT= house to run-IND.NPST.IPFV

'I run to the house.'

This can result in subtle changes in meaning when used with ditransitive verbs.

- (17) a. **ՊՎՐ ՋԸՆ ՅԲԲԸՆ 7ՋՅ ՃԸՆՀՅ:**

*Mod þis ennis tek ȝira.*

/mod θis e'n:is tek yi'ra/

*mod   þis=        ennis   tek        ȝir-a*  
 IS.ERG IN.PC.ACC= ball    2S.DAT throw-IND.NPST.IPFV

'I throw the balls to you.'

- b. **ՊՎՐ ՋԸՆ ՅԲԲԸՆ 7ՋՅ ՅՑ ՃԸՆՀՅ:**

*Mod þis ennis tek bi ȝira.*

/mod θis e'n:is tek bi yi'ra/

*mod   þis=        ennis   tek        bi   ȝir-a*  
 IS.ERG IN.PC.ACC= ball    2S.DAT at throw-IND.NPST.IPFV

'I throw the balls at you.'

Notice in example 17a that 7ՋՅ *tek* is the recipient of the action while in example 17b 7ՋՅ *tek* is the target of the action.

## Genitive

The genitive case is used to mark the possessor of a noun or noun phrase.

- (18) ՅՈ ԵՎՄԴՅԱ ՅՎԴԻՇ ԲՎՅ ԼԻՇ:

*Su Goltu botra mok fra.**/su gol'tu bot'ra mok 'fra/*

$\emptyset = su = Goltu$     $botra$     $mok$     $fr-a$   
 AN.SG.ABS= AN.SG.GEN= Goltu wife IS.DAT see-IND.NPST.IPFV

‘Goltu’s wife sees me.’

Just like other attributives, the genitive phrase will occur between the possessee and its declension clitic.

- (19) a. ՐՎ ՅՈ ՅՇՆՅՅ ՎՅՎ ԴՅ ԲՎՅ ՀՅՄՅ ՎՅՎՇՃՅ

*Do su Zarsa oko tu mos ablu okotaða!**/do su zar'sa o'ko tu mos ab'lú o.ko.ta'ða/*

$do = su = Zarsa$     $oko$     $tu =$     $mos$     $ablu$     $okot-aða$   
 AN.SG.ERG= AN.SG.GEN= Zarsa dog AN.SG.ACC= IS.GEN cat chase-IND.PST.PRG

‘Zarsa’s dog was chasing my cat!’

- b. ՊՎՐ ԴԿ ՅԲԲԸՑ ԽՅ ՅՈ ԿԲՋԿ ՎՅՎ ՃԿՆՅ

*Mod ti ennis ke su Inki oko շիրա.**/mod ti e'n:is ke su in'ki o'ko yi'ra/*

$mod$     $þis =$     $ennis$     $ke =$     $su =$     $Inki$     $oko$     $շir-a$   
 IS.ERG IN.SG.ACC= ball AN.SG.DAT= AN.SG.GEN= Inki dog throw-IND.NPST.IPFV

‘I throw the ball to Inki’s dog.’

When a verb is done because of or due to someone or something, the cause of that action will be declined to the genitive and followed by the postposition **մՅ** *li* /li/ ‘because of’.

- (20) a. ՅՌՈ ՅՌ ՅՎԴԻՎՅՇ ՄՅ ԼԳՅՅՆՅ ՅՆՅ:

*Sur su šus botrasut li puzaða bas ovek.**/sur su ſus bot.ra'sut li pu'zaða bas o'vek/*

$sur$     $su =$     $šus$     $botrasut$     $li$     $puz-aða$     $bas$   
 3S.AN.ABS AN.SG.GEN= 3S.AN.GEN fiancée because.of cry-IND.PST.PRG REL.NRTRV  
 $ov-ek$   
 cook-IND.PST.PFV

‘He cooked because his fiancée was crying.’

- b. የብልም ኃይል ተስፋ የወጪ የወጪ የወጪ የወጪ የወጪ  
*Do Blimva tu okotik su šus avo li urdateþ.*  
 /do blim'va tu o.ko'tik su ſus a'vo li ur.da'teθ/  
 do=            *Blimva*    tu=            *okotik*    su=            šus            avo            li  
 AN.SG.ERG= Blimva AN.SG.ACC= puppy AN.SG.GEN= 3S.AN.GEN father because.of  
*urdat-eþ*  
 protect-IND.NPST.PRG  
 ‘Blimva is protecting the puppy from her father.’

The genitive can also be used in an ablative sense to express movement from or away.

- (21) የወጪ የወጪ የወጪ የወጪ  
*Mor šo alma gu šeba.*  
 /mor ſo al'ma gu ſe'ba/  
 mor   ſo=            *alma*   to            šeb-a  
 IS.AN IN.SG.GEN= house from run-IND.NPST.IPFV  
 ‘I run from the house.’

## 4.1.5 Topicality

Several noun cases have variants that mark a noun as the topic of a discourse. The topic is the entity most closely associated with the higher-level theme of the paragraph.

The case preposition that encodes *only* topicality completely replaces the case marking for a noun that is in the absolute or the ergative.

- (22) a. የወጪ የወጪ የወጪ  
*No Mollur šep.*  
 /no mo'l:ur 'ʃeθ/  
 no=            *Mollur*   ſ-eþ  
 AN.SG.TOP= Mollur run-IND.NPST.PRG  
 ‘Mollur is running.’
- b. ደንብ ገዢ አብ ይህ?  
*Pan ke arb fra vi?*  
 /θan ke arb 'fra vi/  
 pan   ke=            arb   fr-a                                 =vi  
 2S.TOP AN.SG.DAT= bird see-IND.NPST.IPFV =Q  
 ‘Do you see a bird?’

- c. bz vv 79 zzmg vv7zb:  
*Nasoko tu ablu okotam.*  
 /nas o'ko tu ab'lu o.ko'tam/  
 nas=       oko   tu=       ablu   okot-am  
 AN.PC.TOP= dog AN.SG.ACC= cat chase-IND.PST.IPFV  
 ‘The dogs chased the cat.’

This case preposition also completely replaces the accusative and dative cases, but only in certain situations when the intended case is inferable. In other words, it replaces the accusative case only when the ergative is present within the sentence, it replaces the dative in a monotransitive sentence only when the absolute case is present, and it replaces the dative in a ditransitive sentence only when both the ergative and the accusative are present.

- (23) a. rv yg3 3v7ηz pc yg3 3ηzlcz gmg7gj:  
*Do šus botra mi šus akrapis uldetuk.*  
 /do fus bot'ra mi fus ak.ra'pis ul.de'tuk/  
 do=       šus       botra   mi=       šus       akrapis   uldet-uk  
 AN.SG.ERG= 3p.AN.GEN wife IN.SG.TOP= 3p.AN.GEN letter change-IND.PST.PFV  
 ‘His wife changed his letter.’
- b. ηzb gηr7vb bzb glgJvb Jzdzb:  
*Ran urdaton nan ufukon keđam.*  
 /ran ur.da'ton nan u.fu'kon ke'đam/  
 ran=       urdaton   nan=       ufukon   keđ-am  
 AN.PL.ABS= guard   AN.PL.TOP= singer   admire-IND.PST.IPFV  
 ‘The guards admired the singers.’
- c. rv ɔ3vb 7c ɔbbcz b'vv rηzj:  
*Do eson ti ennis n'oko draš.*  
 /do e'son ti e'n:is no'ko 'draʃ/  
 do=       eson   ti=       ennis   no=oko       dr-asč  
 AN.SG.ERG= farmer IN.SG.ACC= ball   AN.SG.TOP=dog give-IND.NPST.RTSP  
 ‘The farmer has given the dog a ball.’

For other situations, there exist combined forms to mark a noun as the topic when it is in the accusative, dative, or genitive case.

- (24) a.
- bɣət ɻɻməg vJvɻɻb:**

*Nut ablu okotam.**/nut ab'lu o.ko'tam/**nut= ablu okot-am**AN.SG.ACC.TOP= cat chase-IND.PST.IPFV**'The cats were chased.'*

- b.
- bɻɻɔb ɻlqjvb Jɔdɻb:**

*Naken ufukon keðam.**/na'ken u.fu'kon ke'ðam/**naken= ufukon keð-am**AN.PL.DAT.TOP= singer admire-IND.PST.IPFV**'The singers were admired.'*

- c.
- þvr ɻc ɔbbcʒ Jɔ dɻbʒəg vJv dcɳz:**

*Mod ti ennis ke þansu oko ȝira.**/mod ti e'n:is ke θan'su o'ko ȝi'ra/**mod þis= ennis ke= þansu oko ȝir-a**IS.ERG IN.SG.ACC= ball AN.SG.DAT= 2S.GEN.TOP dog throw-IND.NPST.IPFV**'I throw the ball to your dog.'*

See section 7.1 for a greater explanation of how the topic is used within discourse.

## 4.2 Pronouns and Determiners

Tavonic has several types of pronouns and determiners that serve as anaphora, including personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, interrogative pronouns, relative pronouns, and other indefinite pronouns.

### 4.2.1 Personal Pronouns

As shown in Table 4.3, Tavonic contains several personal pronouns. These pronouns are symmetrical to other nouns and noun phrases,<sup>11</sup> declining to show gender, number, case, and topicality just like nouns while adding person.

Historically, all pronouns were regular formations with the case-marking preposition and a person-marking pronoun, but over time, these words combined and fused as grammaticalization progressed. The forms are now completely fused.

<sup>11</sup>Oliver A. Iggesen, "Asymmetrical Case-Marking," in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath (Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), <https://wals.info/chapter/50>.

Table 4.3: Tavonic Personal Pronouns

Person	ABS	ERG	ACC	DAT	GEN	TOP	TOP.ACC	TOP.DAT	TOP.GEN
1s	<i>mor</i>	<i>mod</i>	<i>mot</i>	<i>mok</i>	<i>mos</i>	<i>mon</i>	<i>montu</i>	<i>monke</i>	<i>monsu</i>
1pc	<i>morsa</i>	<i>modas</i>	<i>motos</i>	<i>mokas</i>	<i>mosar</i>	<i>monsa</i>	<i>monsut</i>	<i>monsek</i>	<i>monsus</i>
1p	<i>morna</i>	<i>modin</i>	<i>moton</i>	<i>moken</i>	<i>mosan</i>	<i>mana</i>	<i>manut</i>	<i>manek</i>	<i>manus</i>
2s	<i>ter</i>	<i>ted</i>	<i>þet</i>	<i>tek</i>	<i>tes</i>	<i>þan</i>	<i>þantu</i>	<i>þanke</i>	<i>þansu</i>
2pc	<i>tersa</i>	<i>tedas</i>	<i>þetos</i>	<i>tekas</i>	<i>tesar</i>	<i>tensa</i>	<i>tensut</i>	<i>tensek</i>	<i>tensus</i>
2p	<i>terna</i>	<i>tedin</i>	<i>þeton</i>	<i>token</i>	<i>tesan</i>	<i>tana</i>	<i>tanut</i>	<i>tanek</i>	<i>tanus</i>
3s.AN	<i>sur</i>	<i>sud</i>	<i>sut</i>	<i>suk</i>	<i>šus</i>	<i>šun</i>	<i>šuntu</i>	<i>šunke</i>	<i>šunsu</i>
3pc.AN	<i>suša</i>	<i>sudas</i>	<i>sutos</i>	<i>sukas</i>	<i>šusar</i>	<i>sunas</i>	<i>šunsut</i>	<i>šunsek</i>	<i>šunsus</i>
3p.AN	<i>surna</i>	<i>sudin</i>	<i>suton</i>	<i>suken</i>	<i>šusan</i>	<i>šona</i>	<i>šonut</i>	<i>šonek</i>	<i>šonus</i>
3s.IN	<i>gir</i>	<i>gid</i>	<i>git</i>	<i>gake</i>	<i>gis</i>	<i>gin</i>	<i>gintu</i>	<i>ginke</i>	<i>ginsu</i>
3pc.IN	<i>girma</i>	<i>gidas</i>	<i>gitos</i>	<i>gokas</i>	<i>gisar</i>	<i>ginsa</i>	<i>ginsut</i>	<i>ginsek</i>	<i>ginsus</i>
3p.IN	<i>girna</i>	<i>gidun</i>	<i>giton</i>	<i>goken</i>	<i>gisan</i>	<i>gana</i>	<i>ganut</i>	<i>ganek</i>	<i>ganus</i>

- (25) a. *rv 7mgb̥rž 7c ɔbbcʒ Jč 3g mčnJ vJv dcŋz:*

*Do Tlunda ti ennis ke su Lerk oko ȝirak.*

/do tlun'da ti e'n:is ke su 'lerk o'ko yi'rak/

*do= Tlunda ti= ennis ke= su= Lerk oko*  
 AN.SG.ERG= TLunda IN.SG.ACC= ball AN.SG.DAT= AN.SG.GEN= Lerk dog  
*ȝir-ak*  
*throw-IND.PST.PFV*

'Tlunda threw the ball to Lerk's dog.'

- b. *3gř 7c ɔbbcʒ Jč 3g mčnJ vJv dcŋz:*

*Sud ti ennis ke su Lerk oko ȝirak.*

/'sud ti e'n:is ke su 'lerk o'ko yi'rak/

*Sud ti= ennis ke= su= Lerk oko ȝir-ak*  
 3s.AN.ERG IN.SG.ACC= ball AN.SG.DAT= AN.SG.GEN= Lerk dog throw-IND.PST.PFV

'She threw the ball to Lerk's dog.'

- c. *rv 7mgb̥rž 6c7 Jč 3g mčnJ vJv dcŋz:*

*Do Tlunda git ke su Lerk oko ȝirak.*

/do tlun'da 'git ke su 'lerk o'ko yi'rak/

*do= Tlunda git ke= su= Lerk oko ȝir-ak*  
 AN.SG.ERG= TLunda 3s.IN.ACC AN.SG.DAT= AN.SG.GEN= Lerk dog throw-IND.PST.PFV

'Tlunda threw it to Lerk's dog.'

- d. **ՐՎ ԴՋՈՅՇ ԴԸ ՋԱԲԵՑ ՀՅ ԿՅՅՆ ՎՎ ՃԵՂՅ:**  
*Do Tlunda ti ennis ke šus oko շirak.*  
 /do tlun'da ti e'n:is ke 'sus o'ko yi'rak/  
 do=            *Tlunda*    *ti*=            *ennis*    *ke*=            *šus*            *oko*    *շir-ak*  
 AN.SG.ERG=    Tlunda    IN.SG.ACC=    ball    AN.SG.DAT=    3S.AN.GEN    dog    throw-IND.PST.PFV  
 ‘Tlunda threw the ball to his dog.’
- e. **ՐՎ ԴՋՈՅՇ ԴԸ ՋԱԲԵՑ ՅՋ ՃԵՂՅ:**  
*Do Tlunda ti ennis suk շirak.*  
 /do tlun'da ti e'n:is 'suk yi'rak/  
 do=            *Tlunda*    *ti*=            *ennis*    *suk*            *շir-ak*  
 AN.SG.ERG=    Tlunda    IN.SG.ACC=    ball    AN.SG.DAT=    AN.SG.GEN=  
 ‘Tlunda threw the ball to him.’

Personal pronouns are used the same way their full noun phrase counterparts are, in both core and non-core cases, and replace the full noun phrase for which they are serving as anaphor. Example 25a shows a full sentence without any pronouns; examples 25b-e then show variations on this sentence with different noun phrases replaced with pronouns. Notice that the pronoun replaces the full noun phrase, for example in 25d where *ԿՅՅՆ ԿՅ* replaces only *ՅՋ ՄԿՈՒ* *su Lerk*, the noun in the genitive, whereas in 25e, *ՅՋ ՍՈՒ* replaces *ՀՅ ՅՋ ՄԿՈՒ ՎՎ ԿԵ* *su Lerk oko*, the full dative noun phrase. Similarly, when a noun phrase contains an adjective, the whole noun phrase is replaced, including the adjective, as in example 26.

- (26) a. **ՅՎՄ ԲՎ ԼԽՁԽԾ ՅՎԴԻՀ ԼԺԲԴՅ:**  
*Bol no frajru botra kantek.*  
 /'bol no fraθ'ru bot'ra kan'tek/  
 Ø=            *Bol*    *no*=            *frajru*    *botra*    *kant-ek*  
 AN.SG.ABS=    Bol    AN.SG.TOP=    observant    woman    thank-IND.PST.IPFV  
 ‘Bol thanked the observant woman.’
- b. \***ՅՎՄ ԼԽՁԽԾ ՅԳԲ ԼԺԲԴՅ:**  
 \**Bol frajru šun kantek.*  
 /'bol fraθ'ru 'sun kan'tek/  
 Ø=            *Bol*    *frajru*    *šun*            *kant-ek*  
 AN.SG.ABS=    Bol    observant    3S.AN.TOP    thank-IND.PST.IPFV  
 \*‘Bol thanked the observant her.’

- c. ՅՎՄ ՅԳԲ |ՇԵՐԸ:  
*Bol šun kantek.*  
 /'bol 'ʃun kan'tek/  
 $\emptyset = \text{Bol } \check{\text{š}}\text{un} \quad \text{kant-ek}$   
 AN.SG.ABS= Bol ՅՏ.AN.TOP thank-IND.PST.IPFV  
 ‘Bol thanked her.’

## 4.2.2 Demonstrative Pronouns and Determiners

There exist three demonstratives in Tavonic, including ՃԵԾ Շլե /Շլե/ ‘this’ (proximal), ՃԵՎ ԺՐՈ /ԺՐՈ/ ‘that’ (medial), and ԹԿԵՆՔՎ ԼԵՐՔՕ /ԼԵՐ'ԽՕ/ ‘that’ (distal). Just like the personal pronouns, these demonstratives replace the whole noun phrase for which they serve as anaphor. However, unlike pronouns, they do not have fused declensional forms; instead, they decline the same way nouns do.

- (27) a. ՊՎԻ ՊՎ ՃԵԾ ԳՅԶ:

*Mor ko Շլե usu.*  
 /'mor xo Շle u'su/

$\text{mor} \quad \check{\text{k}}\text{o}= \quad \check{\text{sh}}\text{le} \quad \text{us-u}$   
 IS.AN.ABS IN.SG.DAT= DEM.PROX have-IND.NPST.IPFV

‘I have this.’

- b. ՊՎԻ ՊՎ ՃԵՎ ԳՅԶ:

*Mor ko Ժրո usu.*  
 /'mor xo Ժro u'su/

$\text{mor} \quad \check{\text{k}}\text{o}= \quad \check{\text{z}}\text{ro} \quad \text{us-u}$   
 IS.AN.ABS IN.SG.DAT= DEM.MED have-IND.NPST.IPFV

‘I have that.’

- c. ՊՎԻ ՊՎ ԹԿԵՆՔՎ ԳՅԶ:

*Mor ko Լերքօ usu.*  
 /'mor xo Լեր'խօ u'su/

$\text{mor} \quad \check{\text{k}}\text{o}= \quad \check{\text{l}}\text{er}\check{\text{k}}\text{o} \quad \text{us-u}$   
 IS.AN.ABS IN.SG.DAT= DEM.DIST have-IND.NPST.IPFV

‘I have that.’

The proximal demonstrative ՃԵԾ Շլե refers to an object close to the speaker. The medial demonstrative ՃԵՎ ԺՐՈ refers to an object close to the addressee. The distal demonstrative ԹԿԵՆՔՎ ԼԵՐՔՕ refers to an object far from both the speaker and the addressee.

The demonstrative pronouns also inflect to show number, just like nouns. Example 28a shows the proximal demonstrative ՃԵԾ Շլե used in the paucal number, while 28b shows the same in the plural.

- (28) a. þvŋ̩ Jvʒ ðmŋ̩ qzq:

*Mor kos ðle usu.**/'mor kos ðle u'su/*

*mor            ko=            ðle            us-u*  
 IS.AN.ABS IN.PC.DAT= DEM.PROX have-IND.NPST.IPFV

'I have these.'

- b. þvŋ̩ pg̩ ðmŋ̩ qzq:

*Mor kun ðle usu.**/'mor xun ðle u'su/*

*mor            ko=            ðle            us-u*  
 IS.AN.ABS IN.PL.DAT= DEM.PROX have-IND.NPST.IPFV

'I have these.'

The demonstratives can also be used as determiners by pairing them with a noun. These determiners lack flexibility and do not inflect to match the gender of the referent noun like adjectives do. Determiners are placed *after* the noun they modify.

- (29) a. r'vJv bʐʒ zʒmŋ̩ ðmŋ̩ vJv7z:

*D'oko nas ablu ðle okotak.**/do'ko nas ab'lú ðle o.ko'tak/*

*do=oko            nas=            ablu            ðle            okot-ak*  
 AN.SG.ERG=dog AN.PC.TOP= cat DEM.DET.PROX chase-IND.PST.PFV

'The dog chased these cats.'

- b. r'vJv bv zʒmŋ̩ ðŋ̩v vJv7z:

*D'oko no ablu þro okotak.**/do'ko no ab'lú þro o.ko'tak/*

*do=oko            no=            ablu            þro            okot-ak*  
 AN.SG.ERG=dog AN.SG.TOP= cat DEM.DET.MED chase-IND.PST.PFV

'The dog chased that cat.'

- c. r'vJv bʐb zʒmŋ̩ mŋ̩p̩v vJv7z:

*D'oko nan ablu ler̩ko okotak.**/do'ko nan ab'lú ler'xo o.ko'tak/*

*do=oko            nan=            ablu            ler̩ko            okot-ak*  
 AN.SG.ERG=dog AN.PL.TOP= cat DEM.DET.DIST chase-IND.PST.PFV

'The dog chased those cats.'

### 4.2.3 Interrogative Pronouns and Determiners

Tavonic contains only one interrogative, ՀՈՎՅՈՒ ̄rke /ar'ke/. By default, ՀՈՎՅՈՒ ̄rke means ‘who’ or ‘what’, depending on how it is declined.

- (30) a. ԴԵՒ ԾՎ ՀՈՎՅՈՒ ԼԻՇՅ?

*Ter ko arke frak?*

/ter xo ar'ke 'frak/

ter      ko=      arke fr-ak  
2S.ABS IN.SG.DAT= INT see-IND.PST.PFV

‘What did you see?’

- b. ՀՈՎՅՈՒ ԵՑԲ ԼԻՇՅ?

*Arke gin frak?*

/ar'ke gin 'frak/

∅=      arke      gin      fr-ak  
SG.ABS= INT 3S.IN.TOP see-IND.PST.PFV

‘Who saw it?’

As shown in example 30a, the interrogative pronoun is placed **cb ՅԵՐ** *in situ*. In other words, the question word stays in place rather than being fronted to the beginning of the sentence like in English.

Notice also in example 30 that the particle ՔՎ *vi* is not used. Any sentence that contains the interrogative ՀՈՎՅՈՒ ̄rke can be seen to be a question, obviating the need for ՔՎ *vi*. However, ՔՎ *vi* can be added back in to emphasize or, conceivably in rare instances, clarify the question.

ՀՈՎՅՈՒ ̄rke can be paired with certain nouns or postpositions to form other interrogatives such as ‘where’, ‘when’, and ‘how’.

- (31) a. ԴԵՒ ԵՑԲ ԵՑՅՈՒ ՅՆ ԼԻՇՅ?

*Ter gin inam arke e frak?*

/ter gin i'am ar'ke e 'frak/

ter      gin      inam arke e fr-ak  
2S.ABS 3S.IN.TOP place INT at see-IND.PST.PFV

‘Where did you see it?’

- b. ԴԵՒ ԵՑԲ ԵՐԿՅՈՒ ՅՆ ԼԻՇՅ?

*Ter gin etri arke e frak?*

/ter gin et'ri ar'ke e 'frak/

ter      gin      etri arke e fr-ak  
2S.ABS 3S.IN.TOP time INT at see-IND.PST.PFV

‘When did you see it?’

- c. 7cη նcb շηյը ինչ?  
*Ter gin arke mo frak?*  
 /'ter gin ar'ke mo 'frak/

ter      gin      arke    mo    fr-ak  
 2s.ABS 3s.IN.TOP INT with see-IND.PST.PFV

‘How (with what) did you see it?’

- d. 7cη նcb լցու շηյը ինչ?  
*Ter gin pul arke frak?*  
 /'ter gin pul ar'ke 'frak/

ter      gin      pul    arke    fr-ak  
 2s.ABS 3s.IN.TOP way INT see-IND.PST.PFV

‘How (what way) did you see it?’

Շηյը *Arke* can also be paired with other nouns as a determiner to narrow the scope of the question, as in example 32.

- (32) 7cη յա վյա շηյը ինչ?  
*Ter ke oko arke frak?*  
 /'ter ke o'ko ar'ke 'frak/

ter      ke=      oko    arke    fr-ak  
 2s.ABS AN.SG.DAT= dog INT see-IND.PST.PFV

‘What dog did you see?’

## 4.2.4 Relative Pronouns

Relative pronouns are used to create subordinate clauses. There are two relative pronouns: Լց7 *put* for restrictive relativization and ՅՀ3 *bas* for unrestricted relativization.

- (33) a. րv Յօն յա շηյը Լց7 բշով 7c օբbc3 ծcյը:

*Do sur ke arb frak put kalo ti ennis շirak.*  
 /do 'sur ke 'arb 'frak put xa'lo ti en'nis yi'rak/

do=      sur      ke=      arb    fr-ak      put      kalo    ti=      ennis  
 AN.SG.ERG= 3S.AN.ABS AN.SG.DAT= bird see-IND.PST.PFV REL.RTRV man IN.SG.ACC= ball  
 շir-ak  
 throw-IND.PST.PFV

‘The man who saw the bird threw the ball.’

- b. Յօդ յ շոշ լոյլ ՅՇՅ ՐՎ ԲՀՄՎ ԴՇ ՅԲԲԸ ՁԵՒՅ:

*Sur ke arb frak bas do kalo ti ennis շրակ.*

/sur ke 'arb 'frak bas do xa'lo ti en'nis yi'rak/

sur        ke=        arb    fr-ak        bas        do        kalo    ti=        ennis  
 3S.AN.ABS AN.SG.DAT= bird see-IND.PST.PFV REL.NRTRV AN.SG.ERG= man IN.SG.ACC= ball  
 շրակ  
 throw-IND.PST.PFV

‘The man, who saw the bird, threw the ball.’

The restrictive relative clause defines or restricts the referent with further information. Example 33a restricts the referent to specifically the man *who saw the bird* instead of a different man. Meanwhile, the non-restrictive relative clause provides supplemental information about the referent without further defining or restricting. Example 33b provides further information that the man saw the bird, but does not use that as an identifying quality.

The relative pronouns do not decline in any way. Instead, a personal pronoun is used, declined to show the role of the referent within the embedded clause. In examples 33a–b, the referent ԲՀՄՎ *kalo* ‘man’ is referred to in the embedded clause using the pronoun Յօդ *sur* to show the absolute case because the man is the actor within the embedded clause, the one seeing the bird. A more literal translation of example 33a would be something like ‘The man [who he saw the bird] threw the ball.’ Similarly, a more literal translation of example 34a would be something like ‘The man wrote the letters [that I saw them] to his wife.’

- (34) a. ՐՎ ԲՀՄՎ ԴՇ ԲՎՆ ԵՎԼ ԼՈՅԼ ՅՇՅԼԸ Յ ՍՎՅԻՇ ՅԱՋՈՒՅ:

*Do kalo ten mor goken frak put akrapis ke šus botra eðerak.*

/do xa'lo ten 'mor go'ken 'frak put ak.ra'pis ke 'sus bot'ra e.ðe'rak/

do=        kalo    ten=        mor    goken        fr-ak        put        akrapis  
 AN.SG.ERG= man    IN.PL.ACC= IS.ABS    IN.PL.DAT    see-IND.PST.PFV    REL.RTRV letter  
 ke=        šus        botra    eðer-ak  
 AN.SG.DAT= 3S.AN.GEN wife    write-IND.PST.PFV

‘The man wrote the letters that I saw to his wife.’

- b. ՐՎ ԲՀՄՎ ԲՎՆ ԵՎԼ ՅՇՅ ԴՇ ՅՇՅԼԸ Յ ՍՎՅԻՇ ՅԱՋՈՒՅ:

*Do kalo mor goken frak bas ten akrapis ke šus botra eðerak.*

/do xa'lo 'mor go'ken 'frak bas ten ak.ra'pis ke 'sus bot'ra e.ðe'rak/

do=        kalo    mor    goken        fr-ak        bas        ten=        akrapis  
 AN.SG.ERG= man    IS.ABS    IN.PL.DAT    see-IND.PST.PFV    REL.NRTRV    IN.PL.ACC= letter  
 ke=        šus        botra    eðer-ak  
 AN.SG.DAT= 3S.AN.GEN wife    write-IND.PST.PFV

‘The man wrote the letters, which I saw, to his wife.’

The location of the declining clitic for the head noun of the relative clause depends on whether the relative pronoun is restrictive or non-restrictive. When the pronoun is restrictive, as in examples 33a

and 34a, the declining clitic is placed before the entire relative clause, since the embedded clause is serving as a descriptor and thus a part of the noun phrase as a whole. On the other hand, when the pronoun is non-restrictive, as in examples 33b and 34b, the embedded clause is merely supplemental information separate from the noun phrase itself, and so the clitic is placed after the relative pronoun immediately before the head noun.

## 4.2.5 Indefinite Pronouns and Determiners

In Tavonic, there are several words that can be used as indefinite determiners. These words do not inflect in any way, but are placed at the beginning of a noun phrase, including any other modifiers, but after the declining preposition.

- (35) a. 7g ɔm7v pv 3v3z 7zqv7cJ rŋzb7z:

*Tu elto ko boza tavotik dranta.*

/tu el'to xo bo'za ta.vo'tik 'dran.ta/

*tu=        elto    ko=        boza tavotik dr-anta*

*AN.SG.ACC= water AN.SG.DAT= any child give-IMP*

‘Give the water to any child.’

- b. 7g Jcŋ7 ɔm7v 39J rŋzb7z:

*Tu kirt elto suk dranta.*

/tu kirt el'to 'suk 'dran.ta/

*tu=        kirt    elto    suk        dr-anta*

*AN.SG.ACC= no    water 3S.AN.DAT= give-IMP*

‘Give no water to him.’

These same words can be used as pronouns as well. In this case, the modified noun is omitted and the declining preposition modifies the indefinite pronoun instead.

- (36) a. 7g ɔm7v pv 3v3z rŋzb7z:

*Tu elto ko boza dranta.*

/tu el'to xo bo'za 'dran.ta/

*tu=        elto    ko=        boza    dr-anta*

*AN.SG.ACC= water AN.SG.DAT= anyone give-IMP*

‘Give the water to any(one).’

- b. 7g Jcŋ7 39J rŋzb7z:

*Tu kirt suk dranta.*

/tu kirt 'suk 'dran.ta/

*tu=        kirt    suk        dr-anta*

*AN.SG.ACC= none 3S.AN.DAT= give-IMP*

‘Give none/nothing to him.’

As shown in these contextless examples 36a–b, an indefinite pronoun may be translated a few different ways into English. Discourse context generally provides the clues necessary to understand them more precisely. For example, the *čo* of example 36a indicates that the pronoun *boza* is animate and singular. The rest of the discourse would provide the remaining context.

## 4.3 Verbs

Verbs

## 4.4 Modifiers

Modifiers

### 4.4.1 Adjectives

Adjectives

### 4.4.2 Numerals

Numerals

### 4.4.3 Quantifiers and Intensifiers

Quantifiers and Intensifiers

## 4.5 Adverbs

Adverbs

## 4.6 Adpositions

Adpositions

## 4.7 Conjunctions

Conjunctions

# Syntax

How do words go together?

# Lexical Operations

## 6.1 Compounding

How does compounding work?

## 6.2 Derivation

How do you make new words?

# Discourse

How does conversation work?

## 7.1 Topic

# Sociolinguistic Context

## 8.1 Conceptual Metaphors

What metaphors do the vocabulary convey?

For example: language is a tool. I speak *with* or *using* Tavonic, rather than just speaking Tavonic.

## 8.2 Kinship Terms

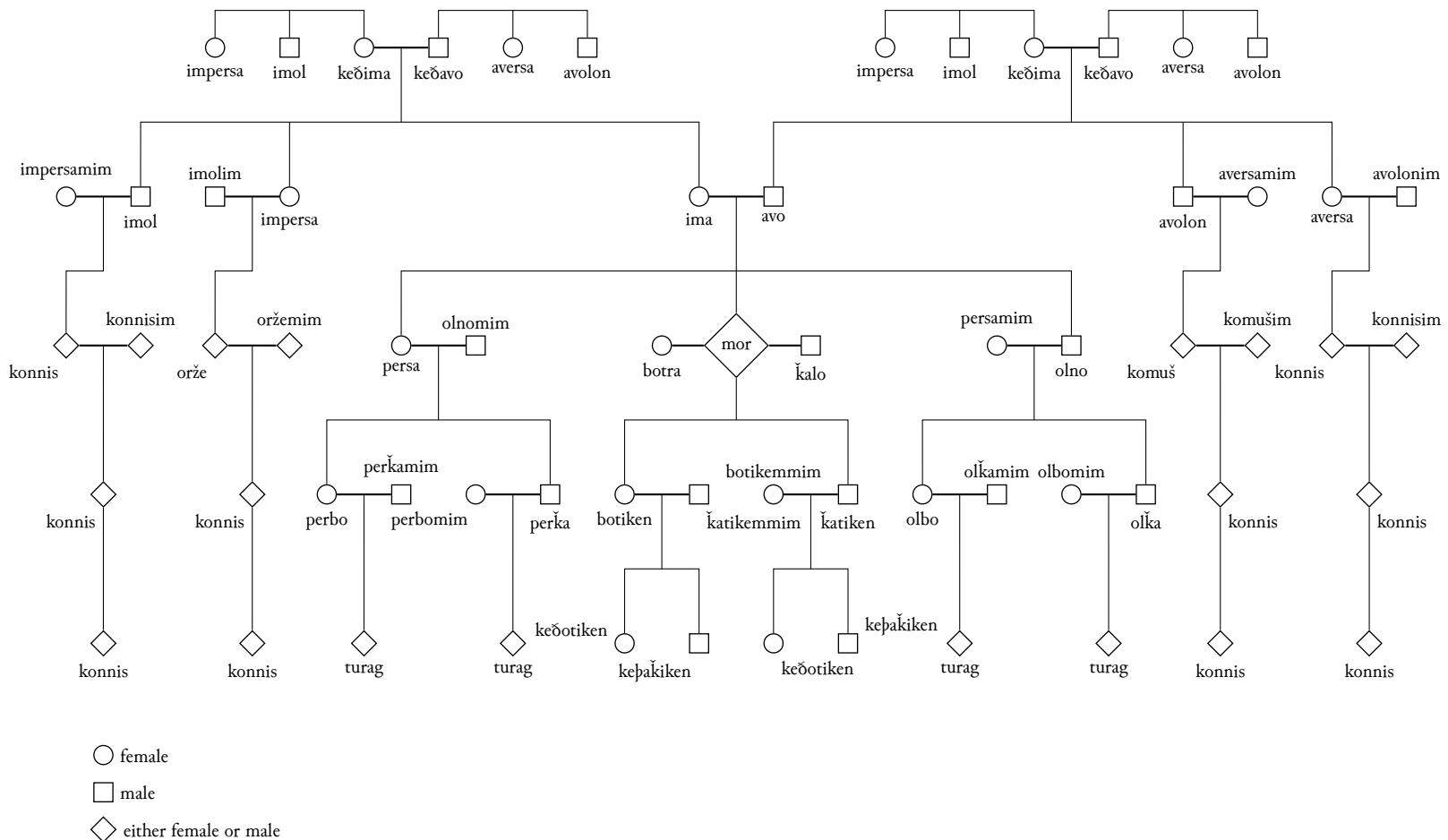
The Tavonic kinship system is similar to Lewis Henry Morgan's Sudanese kinship pattern, being largely descriptive with only a few classificatory terms. Siblings are distinguished from cousins, and parallel cousins are distinguished from cross cousins. Siblings and parallel cousins are identified by gender, while cross cousins are not. Parallel aunts and uncles are distinguished from cross aunts and uncles. Grandparents are identified by gender, but are otherwise undistinguished. Children and grandchildren are similarly identified by gender but otherwise undistinguished. See Figure 8.1 for a full kinship tree.

All of the kinship terms within a nuclear family have distinct names distinguishing gender and generation.

<b>mother</b>	cþz <i>ima</i> /i'ma/
<b>father</b>	zqv <i>avo</i> /a'vo/
<b>parent</b>	qv7z <i>vota</i> /vo'ta/
<b>sister</b>	lɔŋʒz <i>persa</i> /per'sa/
<b>brother</b>	vmjbv <i>olno</i> /ol'no/
<b>sibling</b>	zŋþc <i>armi</i> /ar'mi/
<b>wife</b>	ʒv7ŋz(bþþ) <i>botra(mim)</i> /bot'ra/ or /bot.ra'mim/
<b>husband</b>	pzŋv(bþþ) <i>kalo(mim)</i> /xa'lo/ or /xa.lo'mim/
<b>spouse</b>	ʒzbþ <i>sanim</i> /sa'nim/
<b>daughter</b>	ʒv7cþ <i>botiken</i> /bo.ti'ken/
<b>son</b>	pz7cþ <i>katiken</i> /xa.ti'ken/
<b>child</b>	7z7cþ <i>tatiken</i> /ta.ti'ken/

Relation by marriage is expressed with a suffix *-(m)im*. This suffix can be added to several terms, such as 'sister', 'brother', 'daughter', and 'son'.

Figure 8.1: Tavonic Kinship Tree



in-law	7zqvþcþ tavomim /ta.vo'mim/
mother-in-law	cþzþcþ imamim /i.ma'mim/
father-in-law	zqvþcþ avomim /a.vo'mim/
sister-in-law	Lçñzþcþ persamim /per.sa'mim/
brother-in-law	vmbvþcþ olnomim /ol.no'mim/
daughter-in-law	3v7cJþþcþ botikemmin /bo.ti.kem'mim/
son-in-law	p7cJþþcþ katikemmin /xa.ti.kem'mim/

Terms for one's nieces and nephews are derived from a combination of the terms for 'sister' or 'brother' and the terms for 'daughter' or 'son'.

niece (sister's daughter)	Lçñzv perbo /per'bo/
niece (brother's daughter)	vñzv olbo /ol'bo/
niece-in-law (sister's daughter-in-law)	Lçñzvþcþ perbomim /per.bo'mim/
niece-in-law (brother's daughter-in-law)	vñzvþcþ olbomim /ol.bo'mim/
nephew (sister's son)	Lçñrz perka /per'xa/
nephew (brother's son)	vmpz olka /ol'xa/
nephew-in-law (sister's son-in-law)	Lçñrzþcþ perkamim /per.xa'mim/
nephew-in-law (brother's son-in-law)	vmpzþcþ olkamim /ol.xa'mim/
niefling (gender-neutral)	7gnzþ turag /tu'rag/

The child of one's niece or nephew is called 7gnzþ turag, regardless of gender. Over time, this term became generalized to be used as a classificatory gender-neutral term for all of one's nieces and nephews along with their descendants.

One's grandchildren are distinguished by gender, but not by their parents. In other words, one's daughter's daughter is called the same term as one's son's daughter. The terms for grandchildren are formed as a compound with the word Jcdzmc keðali 'to watch'.

granddaughter	Jcdv7cJþb keðotiken /keðo.ti'ken/
grandson	JcdzpcJþb keþakiken /keða.xi'ken/
grandchild	JcdzþcJþb keþantiken /keðan.ti'ken/

Tavonic distinguishes between parallel and cross aunts and uncles. In other words, one's mother's sister is called differently than one's father's sister. These terms are further distinguished for the in-law variants with the -(m)im suffix.

aunt (mother's sister)	cþLçñzþ impersa /im.per'sa/
aunt (father's sister)	zqçñzþ aversa /a.ver'sa/
uncle (mother's brother)	cþvñj imol /i'mol/
uncle (father's brother)	zqvnþvb avolon /a.vo'lon/
aunt (mother's sister-in-law)	cþLçñzþcþ impersamim /im.per.sa'mim/
aunt (father's sister-in-law)	zqçñzþcþ aversamim /a.ver.sa'mim/
uncle (mother's brother-in-law)	cþvñjþcþ imolim /i.mo'lim/
uncle (father's brother-in-law)	zqvnþvbþcþ avolonim /a.vo.lo'nim/

Tavonic distinguishes between parallel and cross cousins, but does not distinguish them by gender. Within parallel cousins, different terms are used to distinguish maternal vs. paternal cousins, while all cross cousins are labeled the same. Cousins' spouses are treated the same as in-laws by adding the -(m)im suffix.

cousin (mother's sister's child)	vղյօ orže /or'že/
cousin (father's brother's child)	յվթօյ komuš /ko'muʃ/
cousin (cross cousin)	յվբԵՅ konnis /kon'nis/
cousin (mother's sister's child-in-law)	վղՂՅԵՅ oržemim /or. že'mim/
cousin (father's brother's child-in-law)	յվթօՅԵՅ komušim /ko.mu'ʃim/
cousin (cross cousin-in-law)	յվբԵՅԵՅ konnism /kon.ni'sim/

The descendants of one's cousins are not distinguished in any way, even between parallel and cross cousins. Further, they are all called by the same term as one's cross cousins: *konnis*.

Grandparents are distinguished by gender, but there is no distinction made between maternal and paternal grandparents. Similar to the terms for grandchildren, the terms for grandparents are formed as a compound with the word յօդչոյ keðali 'to watch'.

grandmother	յօդչիմ keðima /ke.ði'ma/
grandfather	յօդչզո keðavo /ke.ða'vo/
grandparent	յօդնԴՅԶ keðotav /ke.ðo'tav/

One's grandparents' siblings are called by the same terms as for one's aunts and uncles. In other words, one would call one's maternal grandmother's brother the same term as one's mother would call that person, or as one would call one's own mother's brother.

## 8.3 Names

### 8.3.1 Masculine Names

- ՅՎՄ Bol /'bol/
- ԼԵՐԿ Lerk /'lerk/
- ՄՈԼՈՒՐ Mollur /mo'l:ur/
- ՕՏԵ Ote /o'te/

### 8.3.2 Feminine Names

- ՅԼԻՄՎԱ Blimva /blim'va/
- ԳՈԼՏՈ Goltu /gol'tu/
- ՇԼՈՒՆԴԱ Tlunda /tlun'da/
- ԶԱՐՍԱ Zarsa /zar'sa/

### 8.3.3 Gender-Neutral Names

- የሃይር Erme /er'me/
- ካብር Inki /in'ki/
- የቻባር Ronne /ron'ne/



## **Part II**

# **Tavonic Family: Alnuric**

# History and Ethnography

This chapter will present a brief history of the Alnuric language, followed by a short description of its ethnolinguistic context.

## 9.1 Brief History

Here will be a brief historical description of the Alnureth.

## 9.2 Ethnography

### 9.2.1 Demonyms and Language Names

For hundreds of years, the empire ruled in the southern region of Ardusa. The Tavonic word *unner* /un'ner/ ‘empire’ evolved into the Alnuric word *alnur* /al'nur/. *Alnurek* /al.nu'rek/ ‘Alnuric’ takes its name from this word. Meanwhile, the Redodhic name for the empire is *nonar* /no'nar/, and its name for the Alnuric language is *Nonrik* /non'rik/. Similarly, the Alnuric and Redodhic names for the Alnuric people are *Alnureb* /al.nu'reθ/ and *Nonrib* /non'riθ/ respectively.

### 9.2.2 Ethnology

Here will be a brief ethnological description of the Alnureth.

### 9.2.3 Demography

Here will be a brief demographical description of the Alnureth.

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# Phonology

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# Morphological Typology

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## Grammatical Categories

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# Syntax

# Lexical Operations

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## Discourse

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## Sociolinguistic Context



## **Part III**

### **Tavonic Family: Redodhic**

# History and Ethnography

This chapter will present a brief history of the Redodhic language, followed by a short description of its ethnolinguistic context.

## 17.1 Brief History

Here will be a brief historical description of the Redodhith.

## 17.2 Ethnography

### 17.2.1 Demonyms and Language Names

In the north, the alliance resisted the empire's expansion. The Tavonic word *aroltutah* /a,rol.tu'taθ/ signifies 'alliance', however the alliance instead used the simpler form *arutah* /a.ru'taθ/ 'standers' to signify the alliance of those kingdoms standing against the empire. *Arutah* evolved into the Redodhic word *rejib* /re'dʒiθ/, and *Redoðik* /re.do'ðik/ 'Redodhic' takes its name from this word. The Alnuric name for the alliance is *eradeb* /e.ra'deθ/, and its name for the Redodhic language is *Erathek* /e.rat'θek/. Similarly, the Redodhic and Alnuric names for the Redodhic people are *Redoðib* /re.do'ðiθ/ and *Eratheb* /e.rat'θeθ/ respectively.

### 17.2.2 Ethnology

Here will be a brief ethnological description of the Redodhith.

### 17.2.3 Demography

Here will be a brief demographical description of the Redodhith.

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# Phonology

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# Morphological Typology

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## Grammatical Categories

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# Syntax

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## Lexical Operations

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# Discourse

## Sociolinguistic Context



## **Part IV**

### **Kalaakan Family: Kalaakan**

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## **Part V**

### **Kalaakan Family: Elvish**

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## **Part VI**

### **Kalaakan Family: Dwarvish**

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## **Part VII**

### **Kalaakan Family: Orcish**

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## **Part VIII**

# **Kunmian Family: Kunmian**

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## **Part IX**

### **Kunmian Family: Gnomish**

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## History and Ethnography

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# Phonology

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## Lexical Operations

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## Discourse

## Sociolinguistic Context



# **Part X**

## **Appendices**

## Example Texts

Here are some longer example translations.

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